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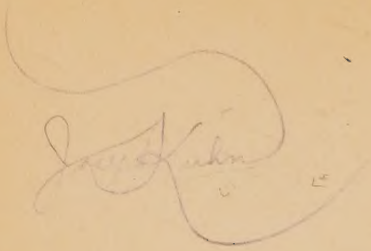

Joseph Kuhn.

P.H.S.

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GATEWAY SERIES

THE

MERCHANT OF VENICE

EDITED BY

FELIX E. SCHELLING, PH.D., LITT.D.
PROFESSOR IN THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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MERCHANT OF VENICE.

W. P. 7

PREFACE BY THE GENERAL EDITOR

THIS series of books aims, first, to give the English texts required for entrance to college in a form which shall make them clear, interesting, and helpful to those who are beginning the study of literature; and, second, to supply the knowledge which the student needs to pass the entrance examination. For these two reasons it is called *The Gateway Series*.

The poems, plays, essays, and stories in these small volumes are treated, first of all, as works of literature, which were written to be read and enjoyed, not to be parsed and scanned and pulled to pieces. A short life of the author is given, and a portrait, in order to help the student to know the real person who wrote the book. The introduction tells what it is about, and how it was written, and where the author got the idea, and what it means. The notes at the foot of the page are simply to give the sense of the hard words so that the student can read straight on without turning to a dictionary. The other notes, at the end of the book, explain difficulties and allusions and fine points.

The editors are chosen because of their thorough training and special fitness to deal with the books committed to them, and because they agree with this idea of what a Gateway Series ought to be. They express, in each case, their own views of the books which they edit. Simplicity, thoroughness, shortness, and clearness, — these, we hope, will be the marks of the series.

HENRY VAN DYKE.

BIOGRAPHY

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE, the son of John Shakespeare and Mary Arden, was baptized at Stratford-on-Avon, April 26, 1564. His father was a substantial yeoman or farmer who became the head alderman and bailiff of his borough, although he later fell into financial difficulties. Shakespeare was probably educated at the Stratford Grammar School, where he learned a little Latin and less, if any, Greek. He married Ann Hathaway of the neighbouring hamlet of Shottery when he was little more than eighteen years of age, and we hear no more of him, save for the birth of three of his children in 1583 and 1585, until we find him, in 1592, an actor and playwright in London. Shakespeare was not a learned man; he lacked that laborious training in the classics which Lord Bacon would have considered the only road to learning, and it is unlikely that he ever acquired that proficiency in modern foreign tongues and manners which was prized among the fine gentlemen of his day. But Shakespeare had what has been called "an experiencing nature"; whatever he saw or read he remembered and gave forth at will, and his plays prove him to have been an exceedingly wise and accomplished man.

We do not know just how Shakespeare began his London career. Like other playwrights, he doubtless acted small parts, helped to mend plays for revival and, showing talent in this way, was speedily advanced. Stories have been insinuated of loose habits; but the stamp of industry is on Shakespeare's life, and his early success and his fidelity to his family belie such tales. In 1592 Shakespeare is alluded to by the dramatist Robert Greene as a rival to be feared for his sudden rise to popularity. In the same year Henry Chettle, another rival, declared Shakespeare a good actor and an estimable man. In 1593 Shakespeare dedicated his *Venus and Adonis*, which he called "the first heire of my invention," to the Earl of Southampton, who remained his friend and patron. From that time on mention of Shakespeare is frequent in many books and documents. We do not know as much about his life as we know of the lives of men of that day who were identified with the court or with public office. But we know as much about Shakespeare, and more, than we know of any of his contemporaries similarly circumstanced in life. Shakespeare had joined a company of actors variously known as Lord Strange's or the Lord Chamberlain's company in the reign of Elizabeth and as the King's in the reign of King James. This company acted chiefly at the old Theatre and at the Globe. This was by all odds the most successful company of its age, and this success was largely due to the excellence and to the

popular appreciation of Shakespeare's plays. Shakespeare never changed his company, and rose to a place in it beside Richard Burbage, the greatest actor of his time, and to a holding of the largest number of shares.

This is not the place in which to give a list of Shakespeare's plays. Thirty-six appeared in the folio of 1623, the first collected edition; and it is likely that much of his earlier work in revision has perished, while some of the plays printed under his name are not wholly his. For want of precise information the exact order of the plays is unknown; but we have information enough to affirm that, coming up to London between 1585 and 1589, Shakespeare continued an active dramatist for more than twenty years, and retired to Stratford about 1611, a rich man on the product of his plays and on the thrift of an honest and orderly life. One variety of Shakespeare's work is the chronicle history. Other writers wrote each a few such plays; but Shakespeare devoted nearly a third of his time to productions of this kind. In them he dramatized for the stage the reigns of English kings and appealed to the patriotic spirit of the nation. The chronicle plays were written for the most part before Elizabeth ceased to reign. Shakespeare's tragedies, with one or two exceptions, cluster about the later years of Elizabeth and the earlier years of King James. In them from *Julius Cæsar* and *Hamlet* (1601 and 1602) to *King Lear*, *Macbeth*,

and *Coriolanus* (1605, 1606, and 1608) Shakespeare reached the height of his dramatic genius, a height still unsurpassed or even approached by those who followed after. The comedies are spread over a wider space and began in 1590 with *Love's Labour's Lost*, extended through *The Merchant of Venice* (in 1594), which has been called "the middle comedy," to *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (perhaps 1598), a lively and boisterous comedy of English life, through the refined and romantic *Much Ado About Nothing*, *As You Like It*, and *Twelfth Night* (1598 to 1600 or 1601), to the serious *Measure for Measure* (1603), and the ironical *Troilus and Cressida* (revised perhaps in 1607). A later group of "romances," as they are called, in which are some of the most exquisite of his plays, *Cymbeline*, *The Tempest*, and *A Winter's Tale* (1608 to 1610 or 1611), conclude the list.

Besides his plays Shakespeare wrote two narrative poems, *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece*, printed in 1594, both very popular in their day. In 1609 appeared Shakespeare's *Sonnets*, some of them already known as early as 1598. Shakespeare's plays are, many of them, interspersed with beautiful songs in which species of lyrical poetry his age was peculiarly rich. It is somewhat strange that Shakespeare introduced no new kind of poem or drama. What he did was to better all that had been done before, and though he had great rivals, it was he who by his example made the Elizabethan drama what it became.

Shakespeare's life in London must have been a busy one, for to the writing of plays he added both acting and management. His work, though written for the popular stage, was greatly esteemed at court; and there is no reason to doubt that he frequently acted with his company before Elizabeth if not before King James. Of Shakespeare's daily habits we know very little. Pleasant stories are told of good fellowship with Ben Jonson and others, and of lofty converse at the Mermaid Tavern, the Elizabethan equivalent of Dryden's coffee-house and the modern club. Nor could Shakespeare have been at all times content with his profession. For although fortune attended the most successful of Elizabethan actors, their social position, especially in earlier times, was far from assured. Shakespeare is supposed to have resided, at one time, on the Bankside in Southwark, on the Surrey side of the Thames.

Shakespeare retired in 1611, and bought New Place, a fine house and grounds at Stratford, his old home. He did not long survive, but died April 23, 1616, leaving no son. The scanty records which we have, show Shakespeare to have been a thrifty man, investing his money with care and protecting his interests, if need be, by the law. He seems to have been much attached to his family and his home, and visited Stratford often, even when in the midst of his busy London career. He was much honoured and beloved by his fellow playwrights, Jonson especially prefixing to the Shakespeare folio of 1623 a poem containing

equal praise of Shakespeare's character and his genius. Although Shakespeare was far too large-minded to work up petty biographical allusions in his works, his plays betray him in those larger lines that mark his greatness. These plays proclaim a wide and deep experience, much kindliness and charity for men's follies and weaknesses, a wealth of humour and imagination, and the highest requisite of the dramatist, a power to feel for others and to appreciate thoughts and feelings altogether foreign to his own.

The portrait of Shakespeare which forms the frontispiece of this volume is variously known as the Jansen portrait from its alleged authorship, or the Somerset portrait from its possession by the Dukes of that name. It is supposed to have been once the property of Prince Rupert and was first identified in 1770. The portrait is painted on an oak panel, bears date 1610, and is said still to be in an excellent state of preservation. Cornelius Jansen was a Dutch artist who painted many portraits in London between 1618 and 1648. As Jansen was but twenty years of age in 1610 and is not otherwise traceable in England earlier, it seems unlikely that this picture was painted from life. It is said, however, to bear "a very strong resemblance in its manner and general treatment to undoubted works of Jansen," and may well have been a copy of an earlier and authentic portrait dating from Shakespeare's lifetime. At all events it is by far the most artistic of the several old portraits of the poet.

INTRODUCTION

The Merchant of Venice is a comedy; that is, a play which deals, for the most part, with the lighter and kindlier emotions, and concludes happily. Like all other dramas, *The Merchant of Venice* represents a picture of life by means of dialogue and action. This picture may be presented on the stage and assisted by artful declamation, gesture, costuming, and music; in later times by cleverly devised scenery and effects of light as well. In that case it will produce a vivid, if conventional, image of life. Or we may create this picture of life independently of such helps and by means of what Shakespeare calls "imagination's inward eye." In this case our enjoyment will depend on the thoroughness with which we have grasped Shakespeare's meaning, on the taste which we may have acquired by an acquaintance with what is good in literature, on our general knowledge and experience, and on the qualities of mind and heart which make each of us what he is. Shakespeare's plays are the most actable of all plays; for Shakespeare was an actor and a manager as well as a dramatist and a poet. Yet many wise men have found a greater pleasure in reading Shakespeare than in seeing his plays on the stage; for in reading for themselves they discovered a truer image of his

figures and of the events in which they move, and gained a purer pleasure from Shakespeare's wit and wisdom and from the glorious poetry in which he clothes his finest thoughts. It is a quality of good literature to become more precious the better it is known.

The Merchant of Venice is a romantic comedy; that is, one which deals with strange events and with ideal forms of youth and beauty. It ties itself to the occurrences of actual life only so far as to leave its picture true to human nature and experience in a larger sense. The contrasted form is realistic comedy which treats of common life and everyday incident. Shakespeare is a master here as well as in romance, as may be seen by reference to his *Merry Wives of Windsor* and to the comedy scenes of his plays on King Henry IV. But *The Merchant of Venice* differs from Shakespeare's earlier romantic comedies, from *Love's Labour's Lost*, or *As You Like It:* for by no means are all the emotions involved light and kindly in their nature. Antonio's gloom and contempt for the downtrodden Jewish race, Shylock's grim and sinister humour, his bond with its murderous forfeit, and the warring emotions of the great trial scene, — these things have in them the essence of tragedy. And there have not been wanting those who have questioned whether this play ought not to have ended in Antonio's death at the hand of Shylock and Shylock's overthrow. It is in this mixture — so true to life — this mixture of light, love, and mirth with those darker passions that stain human nature, scorn, contempt, and revenge, that *The Merchant of Venice* is allied to the

later group of Shakespeare's comedies, to *Cymbeline*, *Winter's Tale*, and *The Tempest*, plays often called the "romances."

The Merchant of Venice contains two stories, that of the Pound of Flesh, or the Bond Story as it is often called, and the story of the Three Caskets. The first, reduced to its lowest terms, narrates how a merchant signed a bond for money loaned in which it was agreed that, in default of payment at a certain time, the creditor was to cut a pound of flesh from what part of his debtor's body he might choose; and secondly how, the bond being forfeit, the revengeful creditor was foiled by the quibble that he must draw no blood and must cut only an exact pound. The second story tells of a choice of two or three caskets of differing exteriors containing respectively a prize of gold, and some mockery of earth or decayed bones, the chooser in no case apparently being a lover. Both stories occur in many versions and variations, and in many different tongues; and the Bond Story, at least, has been traced back to a very early legend of the *Mahábhárata*, the famous epic poem of India. As to Shakespeare, he might have found the suggestion for the Story of the Caskets in the *Gesta Romanorum*, a collection of stories translated into English as early as 1510–1515. The Story of the Bond — much as Shakespeare tells it — is found in the Italian novel of Ser Giovanni Fiorentino, entitled *Il Pecorone* and doubtless already known in England before the date of Shakespeare's play, although no translation of a

sufficiently early date survives to confirm Shakespeare's use of it. Lastly, the very arguments of the trial scene with the rejoinders to those arguments appear in Alexander Sylvain's *Orator*, printed in 1596. This book may, however, have been written later than Shakespeare's play. But it was a translation from the French.

In his choice of material for his plays, Shakespeare generally chose that which was nearest to his hand, provided it was fitted to his purpose. Shakespeare was a practical playwright, writing plays for a profession, acting them and superintending their production. Moreover no certain line was drawn in those days as to ownership in works of this kind. Plays were the property of the companies of actors, and as such were subject to alteration, adaptation, and rewriting. In 1579, at least ten years before Shakespeare came up to London, a book appeared entitled *The Schoole of Abuse*. This was the work of Stephen Gosson, who had once been an actor and writer of plays himself, but who in this book attacked the wickedness and the abuses of the stage. But Gosson excepted some plays from his rebuke, among them, to use his words: "The *Jew* and *Ptolome*, showne at the Bull, the one representing the greedinesse of worldly chusers, and bloody mindes of Usurers: The other," — but we are not concerned with the other. In this play thus mentioned by Gosson we have a Jew, a bloody-minded usurer, and

likewise certain "worldly" choosers: plainly the Story of the Bond and that of the Caskets already united and presented on the stage in a play. No scrap of this play has descended to us; but it is in accord with Shakespeare's practice elsewhere to model his plays on older dramas, for earlier plays not Shakespeare's on the subjects of *Measure for Measure*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, and *King Lear* — to mention only these — exist to prove it. We may therefore accept Gosson's *Jew* as the probable original of *The Merchant of Venice*, acknowledging the possibility of Shakespeare's acquaintance with the stories as elsewhere told. Though when we say "source" or "original" in any matter connected with these works of the greatest of dramatists, let us always remember that it was the inanimate material that Shakespeare borrowed, and that the poetry, the magic, and the infinite wisdom of these plays are Shakespeare's own and Shakespeare's alone.

The precise date of the first acting of *The Merchant of Venice* is unknown. The play is mentioned by Francis Meres among other plays of Shakespeare's in the year 1598, in what Meres calls "a comparative discourse of our English poets with the Greeke, Latine, and Italian poets," contained in his *Wits Treasury*. But some have thought that a play called "Venesyon comodey" (that is, Venice's or the Venetian's Comedy), first acted August 25, 1594, and at the theatre at Newington Butts, was really *The Merchant of Venice*. Shakespeare's company was acting in conjunction with another troupe of actors

at this time and at this theatre; and plays were often known by different titles. Besides, the old stage account-book, in which this entry concerning "Venesyon comodey" was made, was the property of an illiterate old stage manager named Philip Henslowe, who jotted down any title that would remind him of the actual play performed, and spelled in defiance of all rules to suit himself. We may adopt any time we please within the years from 1594 to 1598 as the date of the writing of this comedy of Shakespeare's. And the point is really unimportant, so long as we know — and this we do know — that *The Merchant of Venice* was written in the period of Shakespeare's earlier maturity, in the flush of that wonderful success which must have seemed almost like enchantment to the poet himself, as he looked back upon the raw and country-bred lad that he was when he sought employment about the Inns in which plays were given, and compared with that recollection the Shakespeare of 1598, a successful actor and part owner in the fine, new Globe Theatre, the friend and companion of the aristocratic and amiable Earl of Southampton, and the darling dramatist of his age.

In Shakespeare's day it was the custom for the printers of London to register their intended publications in what was known as the Stationers' (*i.e.* Book sellers') Register. The printer thus registering was protected in his right to his book, and a check could be kept on the publication of books politically objec-

tionable. *The Merchant of Venice* was thus registered by one James Roberts in July, 1598, but it was added on the register "Provided that yt bee not prynted by the said James Robertes or anye other whatsoever without lycence first had from the Right honorable the lord Chamberlen." Now in 1598 the Lord Chamberlain was the patron of the company of actors of which Shakespeare was a member, so that this proviso means that the permission of the owners, Shakespeare and his fellow-actors, must be obtained before *The Merchant of Venice* could be printed. It was two years before Roberts "perfected his copy" as it was called, printing the play under this title: "The Excellent History of the Merchant of Venice. With the extreme cruelty of Shylocke the Jew towards the saide Merchant, in cutting a just pound of his flesh. And the obtaining of Portia, by the choyse of three Caskets. Written by W. Shakespeare." In the same year, 1600, the play was again registered to Thomas Heyes, "by consent of Master Roberts," and printed soon after in an inferior version with a slightly differing title and the addition of the words, "As it hath beene divers times acted by the Lord Chamberlaine his Servants." These two editions are known as the first and second quartos of *The Merchant of Venice* and were the only editions of his play printed in Shakespeare's lifetime.

Of the hundreds of dramas of that productive age less than half were ever printed. And when a play so appeared it was proof either of unusual popularity, of

its having served its purpose on the stage, or of some special interest in the subject-matter aroused by a contemporary occurrence. For example, a fourth quarto of *The Merchant of Venice* was printed in 1652 just at the time when the Jews were petitioning Cromwell for readmittance to England, and for the purpose of creating a feeling against them. But as to these earlier editions we may feel sure that it was the popularity of the play which led to its earliest publication, and that the delay after registration was due to the success with which the Chamberlain's men protected their property rights, allowing printing at last only when the comedy had been in use on the stage for some five or six years. In 1623, when John Heminge and Henry Condell, Shakespeare's fellow-actors and his survivors in the ownership of his plays, collected his works for the folio edition, *The Merchant of Venice* was again reprinted from a stage copy, as appears from the many stage directions not contained in the quartos. Modern editors consider all these editions, but conform the spelling and punctuation to the modes at present in vogue. Shakespeare's plays were very carelessly printed, because it was against his interest to have the quartos come to press, and also because he did not live to superintend the collection of his works, as did some of his contemporaries. Moreover, books were in general far more carelessly printed in those days than in these. All of these matters, though interesting, are of minor importance in themselves; and our enjoyment of Shakespeare

is fortunately dependent neither on dates, sources, nor texts, much less on printers' errors and omissions.

We have learned what was the subject of this play, and have seen how it came to be written and approximately when. In his own age Shakespeare was only one, though incomparably the greatest, of a large number of men who made their livings by writing for the stage, by acting, and by conducting dramatic performances at court and in the city. London then contained not many more than one hundred thousand inhabitants; and yet we hear of no less than five companies acting nearly every day, and producing, on an average, a new play every two weeks. But we must remember that in Queen Elizabeth's time there were no newspapers, no magazines, and no novels such as we have; nor did the stress and hurry of life cause people to look upon the drama, as we often do, as a mere amusement and relaxation. When an Elizabethan had anything to say he was apt to write a drama, and hence the stage absorbed to itself much of the best and the strongest thought of the age. Nearly all classes, too, frequented the theatre in Shakespeare's younger days; for Puritanism had not yet become the power that it was destined to become in the following generations, nor had it as yet taken so many of the grave, the serious, and the godly from pastimes, the harmless as well as the dangerous. Therefore Shakespeare appealed to wider sympathies and wholesomer ideals than many of the writers who came after him and who wrote more purely for the fashion-

able and frivolous classes. Many men wrote plays that endured for their age: Marlowe, Jonson, Fletcher, and others besides. Shakespeare alone seems to have had the power to please and delight his own time and all other times as well, to have written what is almost as vivid and quite as true to-day as it was when he wrote it.

The Merchant of Venice stands among the very best comedies of its author and of its age, for its engaging and ever adequate expression, for its beautiful and musical verse, and for the dramatic skill with which the two main stories are interwoven, linked by Jessica's story and heightened by the episode of the rings. But above all this, is the matchless power with which Shakespeare has drawn his characters, each in its kind and each true to life and to the mingling of good and evil, of strength and weakness which is inherent in the human kind. Shylock is not all bad, shudder as we must at his hardness of heart and unrelenting pursuit of an ingenious and cruel revenge. Shylock's ring ("I had it of Leah when I was a bachelor," he tells us) remains in the memory as well as the knife sharpened on the sole of his shoe for his deed of blood. Nor is the upright and generous merchant, Antonio, faultless; for however meritorious his self-confessed affronts of the outcast Jew may have seemed to the groundlings and apprentices of his time, it was not in the great poet's universal charity not to have recognized to the full this blemish which he put on the Christian merchant thereby to enhance as well as to equalize Antonio's struggle against his abused

and malicious, his pathetic if implacable adversary. Bassanio is a professed fortune hunter, gambling on his chances; yet so swept away and ennobled by his love for Portia that we forget all this in our delight at his success. Did charming, clever Jessica, that strangely undutiful Jewess, deserve a loving husband and a welcome at Belmont? Perhaps misfortune and her deserts later overtook her; though Fortune leaves many a graceless ingrate unchastised. Did Portia break the spirit, if not the letter, of her father's injunction when she permitted all-conquering Bassanio to win her heart before he attempted his dangerous choice of the caskets? But who can be critical of sound-hearted, adorable Portia? or think of her other than she is, a creature of the poet's brain, wealthily endowed with a reality and an immortality beyond the fondest longings of actual men and women.

We may find Shakespeare's stories, and finding them, we often stand amazed at the honest faithfulness and respect with which he has followed some third-rate chronicler. We may analyse his plots and lay bare their mechanism from exposition to climax and from catastrophe to conclusion. Furthermore we may count his syllables and measure his verse, and trace out each of his manifold allusions, following painfully where he leaps, sports, and bounds. All these things are necessary, for we cannot know too much on which to base an intelligent appreciation of his art, and he will render us in return in proportion as we bring a full mind rather

than an empty one to the reading of his plays. But when all has been said, it is Shakespeare's picture of life, his undeviating faithfulness to the realities of this world, whether actual or spiritual, his abounding wisdom and large charity and the sheer poetry that gilds whatever it touches with the rays of a golden sunshine that make Shakespeare the first poet of the world.

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

THE DUKE OF VENICE.
THE PRINCE OF MOROCCO, } suitors to
THE PRINCE OF ARRAGON, } Portia.
ANTONIO, a merchant of Venice.
BASSANIO, his kinsman, suitor likewise to Portia.
SALANIO, }
SALARINO, } friends to Antonio and
GRATIANO, } Bassanio.
SALERIO, }
LORENZO, in love with Jessica.
SHYLOCK, a rich Jew.
TUBAL, a Jew, his friend.
LAUNCELOT GOBBO, the clown, servant to Shylock.
OLD GOBBO, father to Launcelot.
LEONARDO, servant to Bassanio.
BALTHASAR, }
STEPHANO, } servants to Portia.
PORTIA, a rich heiress.
NERISSA, her waiting-maid.
JESSICA, daughter to Shylock.
Magnificoes of Venice, Officers of the Court of Justice, Jailor, Servants to Portia, and other Attendants.

SCENE: *Partly at Venice, and partly at Belmont, the seat of Portia, on the Continent.*

ACT I

SCENE I. *Venice. A street*

Enter ANTONIO, SALARINO, *and* SALANIO

Antonio. In sooth, I know not why I am so sad:
It wearies me; you say it wearies you;
But how I caught it, found it, or came by it,
What stuff 'tis made of, whereof it is born,
I am to learn;
And such a want-wit sadness makes of me
That I have much ado to know myself.

1. *In sooth*, truly.

Salarino. Your mind is tossing on the ocean;
There, where your argosies with portly sail,
Like signiors and rich burghers on the flood,
Or, as it were, the pageants of the sea,
Do overpeer the petty traffickers,
That curtsy to them, do them reverence,
As they fly by them with their woven wings.
Salanio. Believe me, sir, had I such venture forth,
The better part of my affections would
Be with my hopes abroad. I should be still
Plucking the grass, to know where sits the wind,
Peering in maps for ports and piers and roads;
And every object that might make me fear
Misfortune to my ventures out of doubt
Would make me sad.
Salarino. My wind cooling my broth
Would blow me to an ague, when I thought
What harm a wind too great at sea might do.
I should not see the sandy hour-glass run,
But I should think of shallows and of flats,
And see my wealthy Andrew dock'd in sand,
Vailing her high-top lower than her ribs
To kiss her burial. Should I go to church
And see the holy edifice of stone,
And not bethink me straight of dangerous rocks,
Which touching but my gentle vessel's side,
Would scatter all her spices on the stream,

17. *still*, ever, always. 19. *roads*, anchorages. 28. *Vailing*, lowering.

Enrobe the roaring waters with my silks,
And, in a word, but even now worth this,
And now worth nothing? Shall I have the thought
To think on this, and shall I lack the thought
That such a thing bechanced would make me sad?
But tell not me; I know, Antonio
Is sad to think upon his merchandise.

Antonio. Believe me, no: I thank my fortune for it,
My ventures are not in one bottom trusted,
Nor to one place; nor is my whole estate
Upon the fortune of this present year:
Therefore my merchandise makes me not sad.

Salarino. Why, then you are in love.

Antonio. Fie, fie!

Salarino. Not in love neither? Then let us say you are sad,
Because you are not merry: and 'twere as easy
For you to laugh and leap and say you are merry,
Because you are not sad. Now, by two-headed Janus,
Nature hath framed strange fellows in her time:
Some that will evermore peep through their eyes
And laugh like parrots at a bag-piper,
And other of such vinegar aspect
That they'll not show their teeth in way of smile,
Though Nestor swear the jest be laughable.

38. *bechanced*, having happened. 42. *bottom*, ship.

Enter BASSANIO, LORENZO, *and* GRATIANO

Salanio. Here comes Bassanio, your most noble kinsman,
Gratiano and Lorenzo. Fare ye well:
We leave you now with better company.
Salarino. I would have stay'd till I had made you merry,
If worthier friends had not prevented me.
Antonio. Your worth is very dear in my regard.
I take it, your own business calls on you
And you embrace the occasion to depart.
Salarino. Good morrow, my good lords.
Bassanio. Good signiors both, when shall we laugh? say, when?
You grow exceeding strange: must it be so?
Salarino. We'll make our leisures to attend on yours. [*Exeunt Salarino and Salanio.*
Lorenzo. My Lord Bassanio, since you have found Antonio,
We two will leave you: but at dinner-time,
I pray you, have in mind where we must meet.
Bassanio. I will not fail you.
Gratiano. You look not well, Signior Antonio;
You have too much respect upon the world:
They lose it that do buy it with much care:
Believe me, you are marvellously changed.

61. *prevented*, anticipated. 67. *strange*, infrequent in your visits. 74. *respect upon*, consideration for.

Antonio. I hold the world but as the world, Gratiano;
A stage where every man must play a part,
And mine a sad one.
Gratiano. Let me play the fool:
With mirth and laughter let old wrinkles come,
And let my liver rather heat with wine
Than my heart cool with mortifying groans.
Why should a man, whose blood is warm within,
Sit like his grandsire cut in alabaster?
Sleep when he wakes and creep into the jaundice
By being peevish? I tell thee what, Antonio —
I love thee, and it is my love that speaks —
There are a sort of men whose visages
Do cream and mantle like a standing pond,
And do a wilful stillness entertain,
With purpose to be dress'd in an opinion
Of wisdom, gravity, profound conceit,
As who should say 'I am, sir, an oracle,
And when I ope my lips let no dog bark!'
O my Antonio, I do know of these
That therefore only are reputed wise
For saying nothing, when, I am very sure,
If they should speak, would almost damn those ears
Which, hearing them, would call their brothers fools.

82. *mortifying*, causing death. 89. *cream*, thicken like scum on the surface. 89. *mantle*, cover like a mantle. 90. *entertain*, maintain. 91. *opinion*, reputation. 92. *conceit*, thought.

I'll tell thee more of this another time:
But fish not, with this melancholy bait,
For this fool gudgeon, this opinion.
Come, good Lorenzo. Fare ye well awhile:
I'll end my exhortation after dinner.

Lorenzo. Well, we will leave you then till dinner-time:
I must be one of these same dumb wise men,
For Gratiano never lets me speak.

Gratiano. Well, keep me company but two years moe,
Thou shalt not know the sound of thine own tongue.

Antonio. Farewell: I'll grow a talker for this gear.

Gratiano. Thanks, i' faith, for silence is only commendable
In a neat's tongue dried. . . . . .
[*Exeunt Gratiano and Lorenzo.*

Antonio. Is that any thing now?

Bassanio. Gratiano speaks an infinite deal of nothing, more than any man in all Venice. His reasons are as two grains of wheat hid in two bushels of chaff: you shall seek all day ere you find them, and when you have them, they are not worth the search.

Antonio. Well, tell me now what lady is the same
To whom you swore a secret pilgrimage,
That you to-day promised to tell me of?

102. *gudgeon*, a small fish easily caught. 102. *opinion*, reputation. 112. *neat's tongue*, sheep's tongue.

Bassanio. 'Tis not unknown to you, Antonio,
How much I have disabled mine estate,
By something showing a more swelling port
Than my faint means would grant continuance:
Nor do I now make moan to be abridged
From such a noble rate; but my chief care
Is to come fairly off from the great debts
Wherein my time something too prodigal
Hath left me gaged. To you, Antonio,
I owe the most, in money and in love,
And from your love I have a warranty
To unburden all my plots and purposes
How to get clear of all the debts I owe.
Antonio. I pray you, good Bassanio, let me know it;
And if it stand, as you yourself still do,
Within the eye of honour, be assured,
My purse, my person, my extremest means,
Lie all unlock'd to your occasions.
Bassanio. In my school-days, when I had lost one shaft
I shot his fellow of the self-same flight
The self-same way, with more adviséd watch
To find the other forth, and by adventuring both
I oft found both: I urge this childhood proof,

123. *disabled*, embarrassed. 124. *something*, somewhat. 124. *swelling port*, ostentatious bearing. 129. *time*, youth. 130. *gaged*, pledged. 133. *plots*, plans. 136. *still*, always. 139. *occasions*, needs. 140. *shaft*, arrow. 142. *adviséd*, deliberate. 143. *adventuring*, risking. 144. *childhood*, childish.

Because what follows is pure innocence.
I owe you much, and, like a wilful youth,
That which I owe is lost; but if you please
To shoot another arrow that self way
Which you did shoot the first, I do not doubt,
As I will watch the aim, or to find both
Or bring your latter hazard back again
And thankfully rest debtor for the first.

Antonio. You know me well, and herein spend but time
To wind about my love with circumstance;
And out of doubt you do me now more wrong
In making question of my uttermost
Than if you had made waste of all I have:
Then do but say to me what I should do
That in your knowledge may by me be done,
And I am prest unto it: therefore speak.

Bassanio. In Belmont is a lady richly left;
And she is fair and, fairer than that word,
Of wondrous virtues: sometimes from her eyes
I did receive fair speechless messages:
Her name is Portia, nothing undervalued
To Cato's daughter, Brutus' Portia:
Nor is the wide world ignorant of her worth,
For the four winds blow in from every coast

148. *self*, self-same. 150. *or*, either. 154. *To wind*, in winding. 154. *circumstance*, circumlocution. 156. *uttermost*, i.e. love, or help. 160. *prest*, ready. 163. *sometimes*, at one time, formerly. 165. *undervalued to*, inferior in value to.

Renowned suitors, and her sunny locks
Hang on her temples like a golden fleece;
Which makes her seat of Belmont Colchos' strand,
And many Jasons come in quest of her.
O my Antonio, had I but the means
To hold a rival place with one of them,
I have a mind presages me such thrift,
That I should questionless be fortunate!

Antonio. Thou know'st that all my fortunes are at sea;
Neither have I money nor commodity
To raise a present sum: therefore go forth;
Try what my credit can in Venice do:
That shall be rack'd, even to the uttermost,
To furnish thee to Belmont, to fair Portia.
Go, presently inquire, and so will I,
Where money is, and I no question make
To have it of my trust or for my sake. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *Belmont. A room in Portia's house.*

Enter PORTIA *and* NERISSA

Portia. By my troth, Nerissa, my little body is aweary of this great world.

Nerissa. You would be, sweet madam, if your

175. *thrift*, success. 178. *commodity*, merchandise. 179. *present*, immediate. 183. *presently*, at once. 185. *of my trust*, in consequence of. 2. *aweary*, weary.

miseries were in the same abundance as your good fortunes are: and yet, for aught I see, they are as sick that surfeit with too much as they that starve with nothing. It is no mean happiness therefore, to be seated in the mean: superfluity comes sooner by white hairs, but competency lives longer.

Portia. Good sentences and well pronounced.

Nerissa. They would be better, if well followed.

Portia. If to do were as easy as to know what were good to do, chapels had been churches and poor men's cottages princes' palaces. It is a good divine that follows his own instructions: I can easier teach twenty what were good to be done, than be one of the twenty to follow mine own teaching. The brain may devise laws for the blood, but a hot temper leaps o'er a cold decree: such a hare is madness the youth, to skip o'er the meshes of good counsel the cripple. But this reasoning is not in the fashion to choose me a husband. O me, the word 'choose!' I may neither choose whom I would nor refuse whom I dislike; so is the will of a living daughter curbed by the will of a dead father. Is it not hard, Nerissa, that I cannot choose one nor refuse none?

Nerissa. Your father was ever virtuous; and holy men at their death have good inspirations:

9. *comes . . . by*, acquires. 11. *sentences*, maxims. 17. *easier*, more easily. 23. *reasoning*, talk.

therefore the lottery, that he hath devised in these three chests of gold, silver and lead, whereof who chooses his meaning chooses you. No doubt you will never be chosen by any rightly but one who shall rightly love. But what warmth is there in your affection towards any of these princely suitors that are already come?

Portia. I pray thee, over-name them; and as thou namest them, I will describe them; and, according to my description, level at my affection.

Nerissa. First, there is the Neapolitan prince.

Portia. Ay, that's a colt indeed, for he doth nothing but talk of his horse; and he makes it a great appropriation to his own good parts, that he can shoe him himself. . . . . .

Nerissa. Then there is the County Palatine.

Portia. He doth nothing but frown, as who should say 'If you will not have me, choose:' he hears merry tales and smiles not: I fear he will prove the weeping philosopher when he grows old, being so full of unmannerly sadness in his youth. I had rather be married to a death's head with a bone in his mouth than to either of these. God defend me from these two!

Nerissa. How say you by the French lord, Monsieur le Bon?

Portia. God made him, and therefore let him

41. *level at,* aim at, guess. 49. *County,* Count.

pass for a man. In truth, I know it is a sin to be a mocker: but, he! why, he hath a horse better than the Neapolitan's, a better bad habit of frowning than the Count Palatine; he is every man in no man; if a throstle sing, he falls straight a capering: he will fence with his own shadow: if I should marry him, I should marry twenty husbands. If he would despise me, I would forgive him, for if he love me to madness, I shall never requite him.

Nerissa. What say you then to Falconbridge, the young baron of England?

Portia. You know I say nothing to him, for he understands not me, nor I him: he hath neither Latin, French, nor Italian, and you will come into the court and swear that I have a poor pennyworth in the English. He is a proper man's picture, but, alas, who can converse with a dumb-show? How oddly he is suited! I think he bought his doublet in Italy, his round hose in France, his bonnet in Germany, and his behaviour every where.

Nerissa. What think you of the Scottish lord, his neighbour?

Portia. That he hath a neighbourly charity in him, for he borrowed a box of the ear of the Englishman and swore he would pay him again

75. *will come*, are willing to come. 77. *proper*, handsome. 79. *suited*, clothed.

when he was able: I think the Frenchman became his surety and sealed under for another.

Nerissa. How like you the young German, the Duke of Saxony's nephew?

Portia. Very vilely in the morning, when he is sober, and most vilely in the afternoon, when he is drunk: when he is best, he is a little worse than a man, and when he is worst, he is little better than a beast: an the worst fall that ever fell, I hope I shall make shift to go without him.

Nerissa. If he should offer to choose, and choose the right casket, you should refuse to perform your father's will, if you should refuse to accept him.

Portia. Therefore, for fear of the worst, I pray thee, set a deep glass of Rhenish wine on the contrary casket, for if the devil be within and that temptation without, I know he will choose it. I will do any thing, Nerissa, ere I'll be married to a sponge.

Nerissa. You need not fear, lady, the having any of these lords: they have acquainted me with their determinations; which is indeed to return to their home and to trouble you with no more suit, unless you may be won by some other sort than your father's imposition depending on the caskets.

92. *vilely*, badly. 105. *contrary*, wrong. 114. *imposition*, condition imposed.

Portia. If I live to be as old as Sibylla, I will die as chaste as Diana, unless I be obtained by the manner of my father's will. I am glad this parcel of wooers are so reasonable, for there is not one among them but I dote on his very absence, and I pray God grant them a fair departure.

Nerissa. Do you not remember, lady, in your father's time, a Venetian, a scholar and a soldier, that came hither in company of the Marquis of Montferrat?

Portia. Yes, yes, it was Bassanio; as I think, he was so called.

Nerissa. True, madam: he, of all the men that ever my foolish eyes looked upon, was the best deserving a fair lady.

Portia. I remember him well, and I remember him worthy of thy praise.

Enter a Serving-man

Serv. The four strangers seek for you, madam, to take their leave: and there is a forerunner come from a fifth, the Prince of Morocco, who brings word the prince his master will be here to-night.

Portia. If I could bid the fifth welcome with so good a heart as I can bid the other four farewell,

135. *forerunner*. footman.

I should be glad of his approach: if he have the condition of a saint and the complexion of a devil, I had rather he should shrive me than wive me.

Come, Nerissa. Sirrah, go before.

Whiles we shut the gates upon one wooer, another knocks at the door. [*Exeunt.*

Scene III. *Venice. A public place*

Enter Bassanio *and* Shylock

Shylock. Three thousand ducats; well.

Bassanio. Ay, sir, for three months.

Shylock. For three months; well.

Bassanio. For the which, as I told you, Antonio shall be bound.

Shylock. Antonio shall become bound; well.

Bassanio. May you stead me? will you pleasure me? shall I know your answer?

Shylock. Three thousand ducats, for three months, and Antonio bound.

Bassanio. Your answer to that.

Shylock. Antonio is a good man.

Bassanio. Have you heard any imputation to the contrary?

Shylock. Oh, no, no, no, no: my meaning in saying he is a good man is to have you understand me that he is sufficient. Yet his means are

143. *condition*, quality. 147. *Whiles*, while.

in supposition: he hath an argosy bound to Tripolis, another to the Indies; I understand, moreover, upon the Rialto, he hath a third at Mexico, a fourth for England, and other ventures he hath, squandered abroad. But ships are but boards, sailors but men: there be land-rats and water-rats, water-thieves and land-thieves, I mean pirates, and then there is the peril of waters, winds and rocks. The man is, notwithstanding, sufficient. Three thousand ducats; I think I may take his bond.

Bassanio. Be assured you may.

Shylock. I will be assured I may; and, that I may be assured, I will bethink me. May I speak with Antonio?

Bassanio. If it please you to dine with us.

Shylock. Yes, to smell pork; to eat of the habitation which your prophet the Nazarite conjured the devil into. I will buy with you, sell with you, talk with you, walk with you, and so following, but I will not eat with you, drink with you, nor pray with you. What news on the Rialto? Who is he comes here?

Enter ANTONIO

Bassanio. This is Signior Antonio.

Shylock. [*Aside*] How like a fawning publican he looks!

22. *squandered*, scattered.

I hate him for he is a Christian,
But more for that in low simplicity
He lends out money gratis and brings down
The rate of usance here with us in Venice.
If I can catch him once upon the hip,
I will feed fat the ancient grudge I bear him.
He hates our sacred nation, and he rails,
Even there where merchants most do congregate,
On me, my bargains and my well-won thrift,
Which he calls interest. Curséd be my tribe,
If I forgive him!

Bassanio. Shylock, do you hear?

Shylock. I am debating of my present store,
And, by the near guess of my memory,
I cannot instantly raise up the gross
Of full three thousand ducats. What of that?
Tubal, a wealthy Hebrew of my tribe,
Will furnish me. But soft! how many months
Do you desire? [*To Antonio*] Rest you fair, good signior;
Your worship was the last man in our mouths

Antonio. Shylock, although I neither lend nor borrow
By taking nor by giving of excess,
Yet, to supply the ripe wants of my friend,
I'll break a custom. Is he yet possess'd
How much ye would?

43. *for*, because. 46. *usance*, interest. 54. *of*, concerning 63. *excess*, interest. 65. *possess'd*, informed.

Shylock. Ay, ay, three thousand ducats.
Antonio. And for three months.
Shylock. I had forgot; three months; you told me so.
Well then, your bond; and let me see; but hear you;
Methought you said you neither lend nor borrow
Upon advantage.
Antonio. I do never use it.
Shylock. When Jacob grazed his uncle Laban's sheep —
This Jacob from our holy Abram was,
As his wise mother wrought in his behalf,
The third possessor; ay, he was the third —
Antonio. And what of him? did he take interest?
Shylock. No, not take interest, not, as you would say,
Directly interest: mark what Jacob did
When Laban and himself were compromised
That all the eanlings which were streak'd and pied
Should fall as Jacob's hire. . . . . .
The skilful shepherd peeled me certain wands,
And . . . . . .
. . . Stuck them up before the fulsome ewes,
Who . . . did in eaning time
Fall party-coloured lambs, and these were Jacob's.

74. *As*, for so. 79. *compromised*, agreed. 80. *eanlings*, lambs just born.

This was a way to thrive, and he was blest:
And thrift is blessing, if men steal it not.

Antonio. This was a venture, sir, that Jacob served for;
A thing not in his power to bring to pass,
But sway'd and fashion'd by the hand of heaven.
Was this inserted to make interest good?
Or is your gold and silver ewes and rams?

Shylock. I cannot tell; I make it breed as fast:
But note me, signior.

Antonio. Mark you this, Bassanio,
The devil can cite Scripture for his purpose.
An evil soul producing holy witness
Is like a villain with a smiling cheek,
A goodly apple rotten at the heart:
O, what a goodly outside falsehood hath!

Shylock. Three thousand ducats; 'tis a good round sum.
Three months from twelve; then, let me see; the rate—

Antonio. Well, Shylock, shall we be beholding to you?

Shylock. Signior Antonio, many a time and oft
In the Rialto you have rated me
About my moneys and my usances:
Still have I borne it with a patient shrug,

106. *beholding*, beholden. 107. *many a time and oft*, many, many times. 109. *usances*, practice of taking interest. 110. *Still*, always.

For sufferance is the badge of all our tribe.
You call me misbeliever, cut-throat dog,
And spit upon my Jewish gaberdine,
And all for use of that which is mine own.
Well then, it now appears you need my help:
Go to, then; you come to me, and you say
'Shylock, we would have moneys:' you say so;
You, that did void your rheum upon my beard
And foot me as you spurn a stranger cur
Over your threshold: moneys is your suit.
What should I say to you? Should I not say
'Hath a dog money? is it possible
A cur can lend three thousand ducats?' Or
Shall I bend low and in a bondman's key,
With bated breath and whispering humbleness,
Say this;
'Fair sir, you spit on me on Wednesday last;
You spurn'd me such a day; another time
You call'd me dog; and for these courtesies
I'll lend you thus much moneys?'

Antonio. I am as like to call thee so again,
To spit on thee again, to spurn thee too.
If thou wilt lend this money, lend it not
As to thy friends; for when did friendship take
A breed of barren metal of his friend?
But lend it rather to thine enemy,
Who, if he break, thou mayst with better face

113. *gaberdine*, cloak. 118. *void your rheum*, expectorate. 119. *foot*, kick. 131. *like*, likely.

Exact the penalty.

Shylock. Why, look you, how you storm!
I would be friends with you and have your love,
Forget the shames that you have stain'd me with,
Supply your present wants and take no doit
Of usance for my moneys, and you'll not hear me:
This is kind I offer.

Bassanio. This were kindness.

Shylock. This kindness will I show.
Go with me to a notary, seal me there
Your single bond; and, in a merry sport,
If you repay me not on such a day,
In such a place, such sum or sums as are
Express'd in the condition, let the forfeit
Be nominated for an equal pound
Of your fair flesh, to be cut off and taken
In what part of your body pleaseth me.

Antonio. Content, i' faith: I'll seal to such a bond
And say there is much kindness in the Jew.

Bassanio. You shall not seal to such a bond for me:
I'll rather dwell in my necessity.

Antonio. Why, fear not, man; I will not forfeit it:
Within these two months, that's a month before
This bond expires, I do expect return

141. *doit*, trifle, penny. 142. *usance*, interest. 149. *condition*, agreement. 150. *nominated*, specified. 150. *equal*, exact. 156. *dwell*, remain.

Of thrice three times the value of this bond.
Shylock. O father Abram, what these Christians are,
Whose own hard dealings teaches them suspect
The thoughts of others! Pray you, tell me this;
If he should break his day, what should I gain
By the exaction of the forfeiture?
A pound of man's flesh taken from a man
Is not so estimable, profitable neither,
As flesh of muttons, beefs, or goats. I say,
To buy his favour, I extend this friendship:
If he will take it, so; if not, adieu;
And, for my love, I pray you wrong me not.
Antonio. Yes, Shylock, I will seal unto this bond.
Shylock. Then meet me forthwith at the notary's;
Give him direction for this merry bond,
And I will go and purse the ducats straight,
See to my house, left in the fearful guard
Of an unthrifty knave, and presently
I will be with you.
Antonio. Hie thee, gentle Jew. [*Exit Shylock.*
The Hebrew will turn Christian: he grows kind.
Bassanio. I like not fair terms and a villain's mind.
Antonio. Come on: in this there can be no dismay;
My ships come home a month before the day.
[*Exeunt.*

177. *presently*, at once. 181. *terms*, words.

ACT II

Scene I. *Belmont. A room in Portia's house*

Flourish of Cornets. Enter the Prince of Morocco *and his train;* Portia, Nerissa, *and others attending*

Morocco. Mislike me not for my complexion,
The shadow'd livery of the burnish'd sun,
To whom I am a neighbour and near bred.
Bring me the fairest creature northward born,
Where Phœbus' fire scarce thaws the icicles,
And let us make incision for your love,
To prove whose blood is reddest, his or mine.
I tell thee, lady, this aspect of mine
Hath fear'd the valiant: by my love, I swear
The best-regarded virgins of our clime
Have loved it too: I would not change this hue,
Except to steal your thoughts, my gentle queen.
Portia. In terms of choice I am not solely led
By nice direction of a maiden's eyes;
Besides, the lottery of my destiny
Bars me the right of voluntary choosing:
But if my father had not scanted me,
And hedged me by his wit, to yield myself
His wife who wins me by that means I told you,
Yourself, renowned prince, then stood as fair

1. *Mislike*, dislike. 9. *fear'd*, frightened. 12. *thoughts*, affections. 14. *nice*, fanciful. 17. *scanted*, limited. 18. *wit*, ingenuity.

As any comer I have look'd on yet
For my affection.

Morocco. Even for that I thank you:
Therefore, I pray you, lead me to the caskets
To try my fortune. By this scimitar,
That slew the Sophy and a Persian prince
That won three fields of Sultan Solyman,
I would outstare the sternest eyes that look,
Outbrave the heart most daring on the earth,
Pluck the young sucking cubs from the she-bear,
Yea, mock the lion when he roars for prey,
To win thee, lady. But, alas the while!
If Hercules and Lichas play at dice
Which is the better man, the greater throw
May turn by fortune from the weaker hand:
So is Alcides beaten by his page;
And so may I, blind fortune leading me,
Miss that which one unworthier may attain,
And die with grieving.

Portia. You must take your chance,
And either not attempt to choose at all
Or swear, before you choose, if you choose wrong
Never to speak to lady afterward
In way of marriage: therefore be advised.

Morocco. Nor will not. Come, bring me unto my chance.

Portia. First, forward to the temple: after dinner
Your hazard shall be made.

31. *alas the while*, alas. 42. *be advised*, be deliberate.

Morocco. Good fortune then!
To make me blest or cursed'st among men.
[*Cornets, and exeunt.*

Scene II. *Venice. A street*

Enter Launcelot

Launcelot. Certainly my conscience will serve me to run from this Jew my master. The fiend is at mine elbow and tempts me, saying to me 'Gobbo, Launcelot Gobbo, good Launcelot,' or 'good Gobbo,' or 'good Launcelot Gobbo, use your legs, take the start, run away.' My conscience says 'No; take heed, honest Launcelot; take heed, honest Gobbo,' or, as aforesaid, 'honest Launcelot Gobbo; do not run; scorn running with thy heels.' Well, the most courageous fiend bids me pack: 'Via!' says the fiend; 'away!' says the fiend; 'for the heavens, rouse up a brave mind,' says the fiend, 'and run.' Well, my conscience, hanging about the neck of my heart, says very wisely to me 'My honest friend Launcelot, being an honest man's son,' or rather an honest woman's son; for indeed my father did something smack, something grow to, he had a kind of taste; well, my conscience says 'Launcelot, budge not.' 'Budge,' says the fiend. 'Budge not,' says my conscience. 'Conscience,' say I, 'you counsel well;' 'Fiend,' say I, 'you

counsel well: ' to be ruled by my conscience, I should stay with the Jew my master, who, God bless the mark, is a kind of devil; and, to run away from the Jew, I should be ruled by the fiend, who, saving your reverence, is the devil himself. Certainly the Jew is the very devil incarnal; and, in my conscience, my conscience is but a kind of hard conscience, to offer to counsel me to stay with the Jew. The fiend gives the more friendly counsel: I will run, fiend; my heels are at your command; I will run.

Enter Old GOBBO, *with a basket*

Gobbo. Master young man, you, I pray you, which is the way to master Jew's?

Launcelot. [*Aside*] O heavens, this is my true-begotten father! who, being more than sand-blind, high-gravel-blind, knows me not: I will try confusions with him.

Gobbo. Master young gentleman, I pray you, which is the way to master Jew's?

Launcelot. Turn up on your right hand at the next turning, but, at the next turning of all, on your left; marry, at the very next turning, turn of no hand, but turn down indirectly to the Jew's house.

Gobbo. By God's sonties, 'twill be a hard way

29. *incarnal*, for incarnate. 37. *sand-blind*, half-blind. 39. *confusions*, for conclusions. 47. *sonties*, saints.

to hit. Can you tell me whether one Launcelot, that dwells with him, dwell with him or no?

Launcelot. Talk you of young Master Launcelot? [*Aside*] Mark me now; now will I raise the waters. — Talk you of young Master Launcelot?

Gobbo. No master, sir, but a poor man's son: his father, though I say it, is an honest exceeding poor man and, God be thanked, well to live.

Launcelot. Well, let his father be what a' will, we talk of young Master Launcelot.

Gobbo. Your worship's friend and Launcelot, sir.

Launcelot. But I pray you, *ergo*, old man, *ergo*, I beseech you, talk you of young Master Launcelot?

Gobbo. Of Launcelot, an't please your mastership.

Launcelot. *Ergo*, Master Launcelot. Talk not of Master Launcelot, father; for the young gentleman, according to Fates and Destinies and such odd sayings, the Sisters Three and such branches of learning, is indeed deceased, or, as you would say in plain terms, gone to heaven.

Gobbo. Marry, God forbid! the boy was the very staff of my age, my very prop.

Launcelot. Do I look like a cudgel or a hovel-post, a staff or a prop? Do you know me, father?

Gobbo. Alack the day, I know you not, young gentleman: but, I pray you, tell me, is my boy, God rest his soul, alive or dead?

59. *ergo*, Lat. therefore. 61. *an't*, if it. 71. *hovel-post*, post supporting a shed.

Launcelot. Do you not know me, father?

Gobbo. Alack, sir, I am sand-blind; I know you not.

Launcelot. Nay, indeed, if you had your eyes, you might fail of the knowing me: it is a wise father that knows his own child. Well, old man, I will tell you news of your son: give me your blessing: truth will come to light; murder cannot be hid long; a man's son may, but at the length truth will out.

Gobbo. Pray you, sir, stand up: I am sure you are not Launcelot, my boy.

Launcelot. Pray you, let's have no more fooling about it, but give me your blessing: I am Launcelot, your boy that was, your son that is, your child that shall be.

Gobbo. I cannot think you are my son.

Launcelot. I know not what I shall think of that: but I am Launcelot, the Jew's man, and I am sure Margery your wife is my mother.

Gobbo. Her name is Margery, indeed: I'll be sworn, if thou be Launcelot, thou art mine own flesh and blood. Lord worshipped might he be! what a beard hast thou got! thou hast got more hair on thy chin than Dobbin my fill-horse has on his tail.

Launcelot. It should seem then that Dobbin's tail grows backward: I am sure he had more

100. *fill-horse*, shaft-horse.

hair of his tail than I have of my face when I last saw him.

Gobbo. Lord, how art thou changed! How dost thou and thy master agree? I have brought him a present. How 'gree you now?

Launcelot. Well, well: but, for mine own part, as I have set up my rest to run away, so I will not rest till I have run some ground. My master's a very Jew: give him a present! give him a halter: I am famished in his service; you may tell every finger I have with my ribs. Father, I am glad you are come: give me your present to one Master Bassanio, who indeed gives rare new liveries: if I serve not him, I will run as far as God has any ground. O rare fortune! here comes the man: to him, father; for I am a Jew, if I serve the Jew any longer.

Enter BASSANIO, *with* LEONARDO *and other followers*

Bassanio. You may do so; but let it be so hasted that supper be ready at the farthest by five of the clock. See these letters delivered; put the liveries to making, and desire Gratiano to come anon to my lodging. [*Exit a Servant.*

Launcelot. To him, father.

Gobbo. God bless your worship!

Bassanio. Gramercy! wouldst thou aught with me?

114. *tell*, count. 121. *hasted*, hastened. 125. *anon*, at once. 128. *Gramercy*, thank you.

Gobbo. Here's my son, sir, a poor boy, —

Launcelot. Not a poor boy, sir, but the rich Jew's man; that would, sir, as my father shall specify —

Gobbo. He hath a great infection, sir, as one would say, to serve —

Launcelot. Indeed, the short and the long is, I serve the Jew, and have a desire, as my father shall specify, —

Gobbo. His master and he, saving your worship's reverence, are scarce cater-cousins —

Launcelot. To be brief, the very truth is that the Jew, having done me wrong, doth cause me, as my father, being, I hope, an old man, shall frutify unto you, —

Gobbo. I have here a dish of doves that I would bestow upon your worship, and my suit is —

Launcelot. In very brief, the suit is impertinent to myself, as your worship shall know by this honest old man; and, though I say it, though old man, yet poor man, my father.

Bassanio. One speak for both. What would you?

Launcelot. Serve you, sir.

Gobbo. That is the very defect of the matter, sir.

Bass. I know thee well; thou hast obtain'd thy suit:
Shylock thy master spoke with me this day,
And hath preferr'd thee, if it be preferment

133. *infection*, for affection, desire. 142. *frutify*, for certify. 146. *impertinent*, for pertinent. 152. *defect*, for effect. 155. *pre-*

To leave a rich Jew's service, to become
The follower of so poor a gentleman.

Launcelot. The old proverb is very well parted between my master Shylock and you, sir: you have the grace of God, sir, and he hath enough.

Bassanio. Thou speak'st it well. Go, father, with thy son.
Take leave of thy old master and inquire
My lodging out. [*To a follower*] Give him a livery
More guarded than his fellows': see it done.

Launcelot. Father, in. I cannot get a service, no; I have ne'er a tongue in my head. Well, if any man in Italy have a fairer table which doth offer to swear upon a book, I shall have good fortune. Go to, here's a simple line of life: here's a small trifle of wives: alas, fifteen wives is nothing! eleven widows and nine maids is a simple coming-in for one man: and then to 'scape drowning thrice, and to be in peril of my life with the edge of a feather-bed; here are simple 'scapes. Well, if Fortune be a woman, she's a good wench for this gear. Father, come; I'll take my leave of the Jew in the twinkling of an eye.

[*Exeunt Launcelot and Old Gobbo.*

Bassanio. I pray thee, good Leonardo, think on this:

fer'r'd, recommended for promotion. 162. *inquire . . . out*, seek by asking. 164. *guarded*, trimmed with braid. 176. *gear*, matter.

These things being bought and orderly bestow'd
Return in haste, for I do feast to-night
My best-esteem'd acquaintance: hie thee, go.
Leonardo. My best endeavours shall be done herein.

Enter GRATIANO

Gratiano. Where is your master?
Leonardo. Yonder, sir, he walks. [*Exit.*
Gratiano. Signior Bassanio!
Bassanio. Gratiano!
Gratiano. I have a suit to you.
Bassanio. You have obtain'd it.
Gratiano. You must not deny me: I must go with you to Belmont.
Bassanio. Why then you must. But hear thee, Gratiano;
Thou art too wild, too rude and bold of voice;
Parts that become thee happily enough
And in such eyes as ours appear not faults;
But where thou art not known, why, there they show
Something too liberal. Pray thee, take pain
To allay with some cold drops of modesty
Thy skipping spirit, lest through thy wild behaviour
I be misconster'd in the place I go to
And lose my hopes.

179. *orderly*, in an orderly manner. 194. *liberal* licentious. 197. *misconster'd*, misconstrued.

Gratiano. Signior Bassanio, hear me:
If I do not put on a sober habit,
Talk with respect and swear but now and then,
Wear prayer-books in my pocket, look demurely,
Nay more, while grace is saying, hood mine eyes
Thus with my hat, and sigh and say 'amen,'
Use all the observance of civility,
Like one well studied in a sad ostent
To please his grandam, never trust me more.
Bassanio. Well, we shall see your bearing.
Gratiano. Nay, but I bar to-night: you shall not gauge me
By what we do to-night.
Bassanio. No, that were pity:
I would entreat you rather to put on
Your boldest suit of mirth, for we have friends
That purpose merriment. But fare you well:
I have some business.
Gratiano. And I must to Lorenzo and the rest:
But we will visit you at supper-time. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III. *The same. A room in Shylock's house*

Enter JESSICA *and* LAUNCELOT

Jessica. I am sorry thou wilt leave my father so:
Our house is hell, and thou, a merry devil,
Didst rob it of some taste of tediousness.

199. *habit*, demeanour or dress. 204. *civility*, refinement. 205. *sad ostent*, grave bearing.

But fare thee well, there is a ducat for thee:
And, Launcelot, soon at supper shalt thou see
Lorenzo, who is thy new master's guest:
Give him this letter; do it secretly;
And so farewell: I would not have my father
See me in talk with thee.

Launcelot. Adieu! tears exhibit my tongue. Most beautiful pagan, most sweet Jew, . . . adieu: these foolish drops do something drown my manly spirit: adieu.

Jessica. Farewell, good Launcelot.

[*Exit Launcelot.*

Alack, what heinous sin is it in me
To be ashamed to be my father's child!
But though I am a daughter to his blood,
I am not to his manners. O Lorenzo,
If thou keep promise, I shall end this strife,
Become a Christian and thy loving wife. [*Exit.*

Scene IV. *The same: A street*

Enter Gratiano, Lorenzo, Salarino, *and* Salanio

Lorenzo. Nay, we will slink away in supper-time,
Disguise us at my lodging and return,
All in an hour.

Gratiano. We have not made good preparation.

Salarino. We have not spoke us yet of torch-bearers.

1. *in*, during.

Salanio. 'Tis vile, unless it may be quaintly order'd,
And better in my mind not undertook.
Lorenzo. 'Tis now but four o'clock: we have two hours
To furnish us.

Enter LAUNCELOT, *with a letter*

Friend Launcelot, what's the news?
Launcelot. An it shall please you to break up this, it shall seem to signify.
Lorenzo. I know the hand: in faith, 'tis a fair hand,
And whiter than the paper it writ on
Is the fair hand that writ.
Gratiano. Love-news, in faith.
Launcelot. By your leave, sir.
Lorenzo. Whither goest thou?
Launcelot. Marry, sir, to bid my old master the Jew to sup to-night with my new master the Christian.
Lorenzo. Hold here, take this: tell gentle Jessica
I will not fail her; speak it privately.
[*Exit Launcelot.*
Go, gentlemen,
Will you prepare you for this mask to-night?
I am provided of a torch-bearer.
Salarino. Ay, marry, I'll be gone about it straight.
Salanio. And so will I.

6. *vile*, worthless. 6. *quaintly*, artfully, ingeniously. 7. *undertook*, undertaken. 10. *An*, if. 10. *break up*, break the seal of.

Lorenzo. Meet me and Gratiano
At Gratiano's lodging some hour hence.
Salarino. 'Tis good we do so.
[*Exeunt Salarino and Salanio.*
Gratiano. Was not that letter from fair Jessica?
Lorenzo. I must needs tell thee all. She hath directed
How I shall take her from her father's house,
What gold and jewels she is furnish'd with,
What page's suit she hath in readiness.
If e'er the Jew her father come to heaven,
It will be for his gentle daughter's sake:
And never dare Misfortune cross her foot,
Unless she do it under this excuse,
That she is issue to a faithless Jew.
Come, go with me; peruse this as thou goest:
Fair Jessica shall be my torch-bearer. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE V. *The same. Before Shylock's house*

Enter SHYLOCK *and* LAUNCELOT

Shylock. Well, thou shalt see, thy eyes shall be thy judge,
The difference of old Shylock and Bassanio: —
What, Jessica! — thou shalt not gormandize,
As thou hast done with me: — What, Jessica! —
And sleep and snore, and rend apparel out: —
Why, Jessica, I say!

38. *faithless*, unbelieving. 5. *rend . . . out*, tear out, burst.

Launcelot. Why, Jessica!

Shylock. Who bids thee call? I do not bid thee call.

Launcelot. Your worship was wont to tell me that I could do nothing without bidding.

Enter JESSICA

Jessica. Call you? what is your will?

Shylock. I am bid forth to supper, Jessica:
There are my keys. But wherefore should I go?
I am not bid for love; they flatter me:
But yet I'll go in hate, to feed upon
The prodigal Christian. Jessica, my girl,
Look to my house. I am right loath to go:
There is some ill a-brewing towards my rest,
For I did dream of money-bags to-night.

Launcelot. I beseech you, sir, go: my young master doth expect your reproach.

Shylock. So do I his.

Launcelot. An they have conspired together, I will not say you shall see a mask; but if you do, then it was not for nothing that my nose fell a-bleeding on Black-Monday last at six o'clock i' the morning, falling out that year on Ash-Wednesday was four year, in the afternoon.

Shylock. What, are there masks? Hear you me, Jessica:

11. *bid forth,* invited out. 20. *reproach,* for approach. 22. *An,* if.

Lock up my doors; and when you hear the drum
And the vile squealing of the wry-neck'd fife,
Clamber not you up to the casements then,
Nor thrust your head into the public street
To gaze on Christian fools with varnish'd faces.
But stop my house's ears, I mean my casements:
Let not the sound of shallow foppery enter
My sober house. By Jacob's staff, I swear,
I have no mind of feasting forth to-night:
But I will go. Go you before me, sirrah;
Say I will come.

Launcelot. I will go before, sir. Mistress, look out at window, for all this;
There will come a Christian by,
Will be worth a Jewess' eye. [*Exit.*

Shylock. What says that fool of Hagar's offspring, hey?

Jes. His words were 'Farewell mistress;' nothing else.

Shylock. The patch is kind enough, but a huge feeder;
Snail-slow in profit, and he sleeps by day
More than the wild-cat: drones hive not with me:
Therefore I part with him, and part with him
To one that I would have him help to waste
His borrow'd purse. Well, Jessica, go in:
Perhaps I will return immediately:
Do as I bid you; shut doors after you:

37. *forth*, from home. 46. *patch*, fool.

Fast bind, fast find;
A proverb never stale in thrifty mind. [*Exit.*

Jessica. Farewell; and if my fortune be not crost,
I have a father, you a daughter, lost. [*Exit.*

Scene VI. *The same*

Enter Gratiano *and* Salarino, *masked*

Gratiano. This is the pent-house under which Lorenzo
Desired us to make stand.

Salarino. His hour is almost past.

Gratiano. And it is marvel he out-dwells his hour,
For lovers ever run before the clock.

Salarino. O, ten times faster Venus' pigeons fly
To seal love's bonds new-made, than they are wont
To keep obligéd faith unforfeited!

Gratiano. That ever holds: who riseth from a feast
With that keen appetite that he sits down?
Where is the horse that doth untread again
His tedious measures with the unbated fire
That he did pace them first? All things that are
Are with more spirit chaséd than enjoy'd.
How like a younker or a prodigal
The scarféd bark puts from her native bay,

3. *out-dwells*, outstays. 7. *obligéd faith*, faith bound by contract. 10. *untread*, retrace. 14. *younker*, stripling. 15. *scarféd bark*, ship decked with flags.

Hugg'd and embracéd by the strumpet wind!
How like the prodigal doth she return,
With over-weather'd ribs and ragged sails,
Lean, rent and beggar'd by the strumpet wind!

Salarino. Here comes Lorenzo: more of this hereafter.

Enter LORENZO

Lorenzo. Sweet friends, your patience for my long abode;
Not I, but my affairs, have made you wait:
When you shall please to play the thieves for wives,
I'll watch as long for you then. Approach;
Here dwells my father Jew. Ho! who's within?

Enter JESSICA, *above, in boy's clothes*

Jessica. Who are you? Tell me, for more certainty,
Albeit I'll swear that I do know your tongue.

Lorenzo. Lorenzo, and thy love.

Jessica. Lorenzo, certain, and my love indeed,
For who love I so much? And now who knows
But you, Lorenzo, whether I am yours?

Lorenzo. Heaven and thy thoughts are witness that thou art.

Jessica. Here, catch this casket; it is worth the pains.
I am glad 'tis night, you do not look on me,

18. *over-weather'd*, weather-beaten. 21. *abode*, tarrying, stay.

For I am much ashamed of my exchange:
But love is blind and lovers cannot see
The pretty follies that themselves commit;
For if they could, Cupid himself would blush
To see me thus transformèd to a boy.

Lorenzo. Descend, for you must be my torch-bearer.

Jessica. What, must I hold a candle to my shames?
They in themselves, good sooth, are too too light
Why, 'tis an office of discovery, love;
And I should be obscured.

Lorenzo. So are you, sweet,
Even in the lovely garnish of a boy.
But come at once;
For the close night doth play the runaway,
And we are stay'd for at Bassanio's feast.

Jessica. I will make fast the doors, and gild myself
With some more ducats, and be with you straight.
[*Exit above.*

Gratiano. Now, by my hood, a Gentile and no Jew.

Lorenzo. Beshrew me but I love her heartily;
For she is wise, if I can judge of her,
And fair she is, if that mine eyes be true,
And true she is, as she hath proved herself,
And therefore, like herself, wise, fair and true,
Shall she be placéd in my constant soul.

42. *good sooth,* in good truth. 44. *obscured,* disguised. 45. *garnish,* costume. 47. *close,* secret. 48. *stay'd,* awaited. 52. *Beshrew me,* dear me, verily.

Enter JESSICA, *below*

What, art thou come? On, gentlemen; away!
Our masking mates by this time for us stay.
[*Exit with Jessica and Salarino.*

Enter ANTONIO

Antonio. Who's there?
Gratiano. Signior Antonio!
Antonio. Fie, fie, Gratiano! where are all the rest?
'Tis nine o'clock: our friends all stay for you.
No mask to-night: the wind is come about;
Bassanio presently will go aboard:
I have sent twenty out to seek for you.
Gratiano. I am glad on't: I desire no more delight
Than to be under sail and gone to-night. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE VII. *Belmont. A room in Portia's house*

Flourish of cornets. Enter PORTIA, *with the* PRINCE OF MOROCCO, *and their trains*

Portia. Go draw aside the curtains and discover
The several caskets to this noble prince.
Now make your choice.
Morocco. The first, of gold, who this inscription bears,
'Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire;'

67. *on't*, of it. 1. *discover*, disclose. 4. *who*, which.

The second, silver, which this promise carries,
'Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves;'
This third, dull lead, with warning all as blunt,
'Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath.'
How shall I know if I do choose the right?
Portia. The one of them contains my picture, prince:
If you choose that, then I am yours withal.
Morocco. Some god direct my judgement! Let me see;
I will survey the inscriptions back again.
What says this leaden casket?
'Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath.'
Must give! for what? for lead? hazard for lead?
This casket threatens. Men that hazard all
Do it in hope of fair advantages:
A golden mind stoops not to shows of dross;
I'll then nor give nor hazard aught for lead.
What says the silver with her virgin hue?
'Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves.'
As much as he deserves! Pause there, Morocco,
And weigh thy value with an even hand:
If thou be'st rated by thy estimation,

8. *blunt*, dull. 14. *back again*, in inverse order. 20. *shows*, appearances.

Thou dost deserve enough; and yet enough
May not extend so far as to the lady:
And yet to be afeard of my deserving
Were but a weak disabling of myself.
As much as I deserve! Why, that's the lady:
I do in birth deserve her, and in fortunes,
In graces and in qualities of breeding;
But more than these, in love I do deserve.
What if I stray'd no further, but chose here?
Let's see once more this saying graved in gold;
'Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire.'
Why, that's the lady; all the world desires her;
From the four corners of the earth they come,
To kiss this shrine, this mortal-breathing saint:
The Hyrcanian deserts and the vasty wilds
Of wide Arabia are as throughfares now
For princes to come view fair Portia;
The watery kingdom, whose ambitious head
Spits in the face of heaven, is no bar
To stop the foreign spirits, but they come,
As o'er a brook, to see fair Portia.
One of these three contains her heavenly picture.
Is't like that lead contains her? 'Twere damnation
To think so base a thought: it were too gross

30. *disabling*, depreciation. 40. *mortal-breathing*, endowed with human life. 41. *vasty*, desolate. 42. *throughfares*, thoroughfares.

To rib her cerecloth in the obscure grave.
Or shall I think in silver she's immured,
Being ten times undervalued to tried gold?
O sinful thought! Never so rich a gem
Was set in worse than gold. They have in England
A coin that bears the figure of an angel
Stamped in gold, but that's insculp'd upon;
But here an angel in a golden bed
Lies all within. Deliver me the key:
Here do I choose, and thrive I as I may!

Por. There, take it, prince; and if my form lie there,
Then I am yours. [*He unlocks the golden casket.*

Morocco. O hell! what have we here?
A carrion Death, within whose empty eye
There is a written scroll! I'll read the writing.

[*Reads*] All that glisters is not gold;
Often have you heard that told:
Many a man his life hath sold
But my outside to behold:
Gilded tombs do worms enfold.
Had you been as wise as bold,
Young in limbs, in judgement old,
Your answer had not been enscroll'd:
Fare you well; your suit is cold.

51. *rib*, cover, wrap. 51. *cerecloth*, waxed cloth used in burial. 53. *undervalued*, inferior in value to. 57. *insculp'd*, engraven. 63. *Death*, Death's head. 65. *glisters*, glitters. 72. *enscroll'd* written on a scroll.

Cold, indeed; and labour lost:
Then, farewell, heat, and welcome, frost!
Portia, adieu. I have too grieved a heart
To take a tedious leave: thus losers part.
[*Exit with his train. Flourish of Cornets.*
Portia. A gentle riddance. Draw the curtains, go.
Let all of his complexion choose me so. 79
[*Exeunt.*

Scene VIII. *Venice. A street*

Enter Salarino *and* Salanio

Salarino. Why, man, I saw Bassanio under sail:
With him is Gratiano gone along;
And in their ship I am sure Lorenzo is not.
Salanio. The villain Jew with outcries raised the duke,
Who went with him to search Bassanio's ship.
Salarino. He came too late, the ship was under sail:
But there the duke was given to understand
That in a gondola were seen together
Lorenzo and his amorous Jessica:
Besides, Antonio certified the duke 10
They were not with Bassanio in his ship.
Salanio. I never heard a passion so confused,
So strange, outrageous, and so variable,

77. *part*, depart. 4. *raised*, roused. 10. *certified*, assured. 12. *passion*, passionate outcry.

As the dog Jew did utter in the streets:
'My daughter! O my ducats! O my daughter!
Fled with a Christian! O my Christian ducats!
Justice! the law! my ducats, and my daughter!
A sealed bag, two sealed bags of ducats,
Of double ducats, stolen from me by my daughter!
And jewels, two stones, two rich and precious stones,
Stolen by my daughter! Justice! find the girl;
She hath the stones upon her, and the ducats.'

Salarino. Why, all the boys in Venice follow him,
Crying, his stones, his daughter, and his ducats.

Salanio. Let good Antonio look he keep his day,
Or he shall pay for this.

Salarino. Marry, well remember'd.
I reason'd with a Frenchman yesterday,
Who told me, in the narrow seas that part
The French and English, there miscarriéd
A vessel of our country richly fraught:
I thought upon Antonio when he told me,
And wish'd in silence that it were not his.

Salanio. You were best to tell Antonio what you hear;
Yet do not suddenly, for it may grieve him.

Salarino. A kinder gentleman treads not the earth.
I saw Bassanio and Antonio part:
Bassanio told him he would make some speed

27. *reason'd*, talked. 30. *fraught*, freighted.

Of his return: he answer'd, 'Do not so;
Slubber not business for my sake, Bassanio,
But stay the very riping of the time;
And for the Jew's bond which he hath of me,
Let it not enter in your mind of love:
Be merry, and employ your chiefest thoughts
To courtship and such fair ostents of love
As shall conveniently become you there:'
And even there, his eye being big with tears,
Turning his face, he put his hand behind him,
And with affection wondrous sensible
He wrung Bassanio's hand; and so they parted.

Salanio. I think he only loves the world for him.
I pray thee, let us go and find him out
And quicken his embracéd heaviness
With some delight or other.

Salarino. Do we so. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IX. *Belmont. A room in Portia's house*

Enter NERISSA *with a* Servitor

Nerissa. Quick, quick, I pray thee; draw the curtain straight:
The Prince of Arragon hath ta'en his oath,
And comes to his election presently.

39. *Slubber*, slur over. 40. *riping*, ripening. 42. *mind of love*, mind occupied with love. 44. *ostents*, shows. 45. *conveniently*, suitably. 48. *affection wondrous sensible*, wonderfully sensitive emotion. 1. *straight*, directly. 2. *ta'en*, taken. 3. *election*, choice. 3. *presently*, at once.

Flourish of Cornets. Enter the PRINCE OF ARRAGON, PORTIA, *and their trains*

Portia. Behold, there stand the caskets, noble prince:
If you choose that wherein I am contain'd,
Straight shall our nuptial rites be solemnized:
But if you fail, without more speech, my lord,
You must be gone from hence immediately.

Arragon. I am enjoin'd by oath to observe three things:
First, never to unfold to any one
Which casket 'twas I chose; next, if I fail
Of the right casket, never in my life
To woo a maid in way of marriage:
Lastly,
If I do fail in fortune of my choice,
Immediately to leave you and be gone.

Portia. To these injunctions every one doth swear
That comes to hazard for my worthless self.

Arragon. And so have I address'd me. Fortune now
To my heart's hope! Gold; silver; and base lead.
'Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath.'
You shall look fairer, ere I give or hazard.
What says the golden chest? ha! let me see:

19. *address'd me*, prepared myself.

'Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire.'
What many men desire! that 'many' may be meant
By the fool multitude, that choose by show,
Not learning more than the fond eye doth teach;
Which pries not to the interior, but, like the martlet,
Builds in the weather on the outward wall,
Even in the force and road of casualty.
I will not choose what many men desire,
Because I will not jump with common spirits
And rank me with the barbarous multitudes.
Why, then to thee, thou silver treasure-house;
Tell me once more what title thou dost bear:
'Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves:'
And well said too; for who shall go about
To cozen fortune and be honourable
Without the stamp of merit? Let none presume
To wear an undeservéd dignity.
O, that estates, degrees and offices
Were not derived corruptly, and that clear honour
Were purchased by the merit of the wearer!
How many then should cover that stand bare!

27. *fond*, foolish. 28. *martlet*, swallow. 30. *force*, power. 32. *jump*, agree with. 38. *cozen*, cheat. 43. *purchased*, acquired, won. 44. *cover*, wear their hats as masters.

How many be commanded that command!
How much low peasantry would then be glean'd
From the true seed of honour! and how much honour
Pick'd from the chaff and ruin of the times
To be new-varnish'd! Well, but to my choice:
'Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves.'
I will assume desert. Give me a key for this,
And instantly unlock my fortunes here.
[*He opens the silver casket.*

Portia. [*Aside*] Too long a pause for that which you find there.

Arragon. What's here? the portrait of a blinking idiot,
Presenting me a schedule! I will read it.
How much unlike art thou to Portia!
How much unlike my hopes and my deservings!
'Who chooseth me shall have as much as he deserves.'
Did I deserve no more than a fool's head?
Is that my prize? are my deserts no better?

Portia. To offend, and judge, are distinct offices
And of opposéd natures.

Arragon. What is here?
[*Reads*] The fire seven times tried this:
Seven times tried that judgement is,
That did never choose amiss.

48. *ruin*, rubbish. 51. *assume*, take to myself.

Some there be that shadows kiss;
Such have but a shadow's bliss:
There be fools alive, i-wis,
Silver'd o'er; and so was this.
Take what wife you will to bed,
I will ever be your head:
So be gone: you are sped.

Still more fool I shall appear
By the time I linger here:
With one fool's head I came to woo,
But I go away with two.
Sweet, adieu. I'll keep my oath,
Patiently to bear my wroth.

[*Exeunt Arragon and train.*

Portia. Thus hath the candle singed the moth.
O, these deliberate fools! when they do choose,
They have the wisdom by their wit to lose.

Nerissa. The ancient saying is no heresy,
Hanging and wiving goes by destiny.

Portia. Come, draw the curtain, Nerissa.

Enter a Servant

Servant. Where is my lady?

Portia. Here: what would my lord?

Servant. Madam, there is alighted at your gate
A young Venetian, one that comes before
To signify the approaching of his lord;

68. *i-wis*, assuredly. 81. *wit*, knowledge, power of mind.

From whom he bringeth sensible regreets,
To wit, besides commends and courteous breath,
Gifts of rich value. Yet I have not seen
So likely an ambassador of love:
A day in April never came so sweet,
To show how costly summer was at hand,
As this fore-spurrer comes before his lord.

Portia. No more, I pray thee: I am half afeard
Thou wilt say anon he is some kin to thee,
Thou spend'st such high-day wit in praising him.
Come, come, Nerissa; for I long to see
Quick Cupid's post that comes so mannerly.

Nerissa. Bassanio, Lord Love, if thy will it be!

[*Exeunt.*

ACT III

Scene I. *Venice. A street*

Enter Salanio *and* Salarino

Salanio. Now, what news on the Rialto?

Salarino. Why, yet it lives there unchecked that Antonio hath a ship of rich lading wrecked on the narrow seas; the Goodwins, I think they call the place; a very dangerous flat and fatal, where the carcases of many a tall ship lie buried, as they say, if my gossip Report be an honest woman of her word.

89. *sensible regreets*, evident salutations. 90. *commends*, commendations. 92. *likely*, promising. 100. *post*, courier.

Salanio. I would she were as lying a gossip in that as ever knapped ginger or made her neighbours believe she wept for the death of a third husband. But it is true, without any slips of prolixity or crossing the plain highway of talk, that the good Antonio, the honest Antonio, — O that I had a title good enough to keep his name company! —

Salarino. Come, the full stop.

Salanio. Ha! what sayest thou? Why, the end is, he hath lost a ship.

Salarino. I would it might prove the end of his losses.

Salanio. Let me say 'amen' betimes, lest the devil cross my prayer, for here he comes in the likeness of a Jew.

Enter SHYLOCK

How now, Shylock! what news among the merchants?

Shylock. You knew, none so well, none so well as you, of my daughter's flight.

Salarino. That's certain: I, for my part, knew the tailor that made the wings she flew withal.

Salanio. And Shylock, for his own part, knew the bird was fledged; and then it is the complexion of them all to leave the dam. . . . . .

10. *knapped*, broke into small pieces. 32. *complexion*, disposition, nature.

Shylock. My own flesh and blood to rebel!

Salarino. There is more difference between thy flesh and hers than between jet and ivory; more between your bloods than there is between red wine and Rhenish. But tell us, do you hear whether Antonio have had any loss at sea or no?

Shylock. There I have another bad match; a bankrupt, a prodigal, who dare scarce show his head on the Rialto; a beggar, that was used to come so smug upon the mart; let him look to his bond: he was wont to call me usurer; let him look to his bond: he was wont to lend money for a Christian courtesy; let him look to his bond.

Salarino. Why, I am sure, if he forfeit, thou wilt not take his flesh: what's that good for?

Shylock. To bait fish withal: if it will feed nothing else, it will feed my revenge. He hath disgraced me, and hindered me half a million; laughed at my losses, mocked at my gains, scorned my nation, thwarted my bargains, cooled my friends, heated mine enemies; and what's his reason? I am a Jew. Hath not a Jew eyes? hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer, as a Christian

46. *match*, bargain. 49. *smug*, trim, neat. 56. *disgraced me*, lowered me in public estimation.

is? If you prick us, do we not bleed? if you tickle us, do we not laugh? if you poison us, do we not die? and if you wrong us, shall we not revenge? If we are like you in the rest, we will resemble you in that. If a Jew wrong a Christian, what is his humility? Revenge. If a Christian wrong a Jew, what should his sufferance be by Christian example? Why, revenge. The villany you teach me, I will execute, and it shall go hard but I will better the instruction.

Enter a Servant

Servant. Gentlemen, my master Antonio is at his house and desires to speak with you both.

Salarino. We have been up and down to seek him.

Enter Tubal

Salanio. Here comes another of the tribe: a third cannot be matched, unless the devil himself turn Jew.

[*Exeunt Salanio, Salarino, and Servant.*

Shylock. How now, Tubal! what news from Genoa? hast thou found my daughter?

Tubal. I often came where I did hear of her, but cannot find her.

Shylock. Why, there, there, there, there! a diamond gone, cost me two thousand ducats in

72. *humility,* humanity. 81. *cannot be matched,* cannot be found to match them. 88. *cost,* that cost.

Frankfort! The curse never fell upon our nation till now; I never felt it till now; two thousand ducats in that; and other precious, precious jewels. I would my daughter were dead at my foot, and the jewels in her ear! would she were hearsed at my foot, and the ducats in her coffin! No news of them? Why so? and I know not what's spent in the search: why then, loss upon loss! the thief gone with so much, and so much to find the thief; and no satisfaction, no revenge: nor no ill luck stirring but what lights on my shoulders; no sighs but of my breathing; no tears but of my shedding.

Tubal. Yes, other men have ill luck too: Antonio, as I heard in Genoa,—

Shylock. What, what, what? ill luck, ill luck?

Tubal. Hath an argosy cast away, coming from Tripolis.

Shylock. I thank God, I thank God. Is't true, is't true?

Tubal. I spoke with some of the sailors that escaped the wreck.

Shylock. I thank thee, good Tubal: good news, good news! ha, ha! here? in Genoa?

Tubal. Your daughter spent in Genoa, as I heard, in one night fourscore ducats.

Shylock. Thou stickest a dagger in me: I shall never see my gold again: fourscore ducats at a sitting! fourscore ducats!

Tubal. There came divers of Antonio's creditors in my company to Venice, that swear he cannot choose but break.

Shylock. I am very glad of it: I'll plague him; I'll torture him: I am glad of it.

Tubal. One of them showed me a ring that he had of your daughter for a monkey.

Shylock. Out upon her! Thou torturest me, Tubal: it was my turquoise; I had it of Leah when I was a bachelor: I would not have given it for a wilderness of monkeys.

Tubal. But Antonio is certainly undone.

Shylock. Nay, that's true, that's very true. Go, Tubal, fee me an officer; bespeak him a fortnight before. I will have the heart of him, if he forfeit; for, were he out of Venice, I can make what merchandise I will. Go, go, Tubal, and meet me at our synagogue; go, good Tubal; at our synagogue, Tubal. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *Belmont. A room in Portia's house*

Enter BASSANIO, PORTIA, GRATIANO, NERISSA, *and* Attendants

Portia. I pray you, tarry: pause a day or two
Before you hazard; for, in choosing wrong,
I lose your company: therefore forbear awhile.
There's something tells me, but it is not love,

120. *break*, fail.

I would not lose you; and you know yourself,
Hate counsels not in such a quality.
But lest you should not understand me well, —
And yet a maiden hath no tongue but thought, —
I would detain you here some month or two
Before you venture for me. I could teach you
How to choose right, but I am then forsworn;
So will I never be: so may you miss me;
But if you do, you'll make me wish a sin,
That I had been forsworn. Beshrew your eyes,
They have o'erlook'd me and divided me;
One half of me is yours, the other half yours,
Mine own, I would say; but if mine, then yours,
And so all yours. O, these naughty times
Put bars between the owners and their rights!
And so, though yours, not yours. Prove it so,
Let fortune go to hell for it, not I.
I speak too long; but 'tis to peize the time,
To eke it and to draw it out in length,
To stay you from election.

Bassanio. Let me choose;
For as I am, I live upon the rack.

Portia. Upon the rack, Bassanio! then confess
What treason there is mingled with your love.

Bassanio. None but that ugly treason of mistrust,
Which makes me fear the enjoying of my love:
There may as well be amity and life

14. *Beshrew*, woe to. 15. *o'erlook'd*, bewitched. 18. *naughty*, worthless. 22. *peize*, weigh. 24. *election*, choice.

'Tween snow and fire, as treason and my love.

Portia. Ay, but I fear you speak upon the rack,
Where men enforcéd do speak anything.

Bassanio. Promise me life, and I'll confess the truth.

Portia. Well then, confess and live.

Bassanio. 'Confess' and 'love'
Had been the very sum of my confession:
O happy torment, when my torturer
Doth teach me answers for deliverance!
But let me to my fortune and the caskets.

Portia. Away, then! I am lock'd in one of them: 40
If you do love me, you will find me out.
Nerissa and the rest, stand all aloof.
Let music sound while he doth make his choice;
Then, if he lose, he makes a swan-like end,
Fading in music: that the comparison
May stand more proper, my eye shall be the stream
And watery death-bed for him. He may win;
And what is music then? Then music is
Even as the flourish when true subjects bow
To a new-crownéd monarch: such it is 50
As are those dulcet sounds in break of day
That creep into the dreaming bridegroom's ear
And summon him to marriage. Now he goes,
With no less presence, but with much more love,

45. *Fading*, departing. 51. *dulcet*, sweet. 54. *presence*, dignity of bearing.

Than young Alcides, when he did redeem
The virgin tribute paid by howling Troy
To the sea-monster: I stand for sacrifice;
The rest aloof are the Dardanian wives,
With blearéd visages, come forth to view
The issue of the exploit. Go, Hercules!
Live thou, I live: with much much more dismay
I view the fight than thou that makest the fray.

A Song the whilst BASSANIO *comments on the caskets to himself*

Tell me where is fancy bred,
Or in the heart or in the head?
How begot, how nourished?
Reply, reply.
It is engender'd in the eyes,
With gazing fed; and fancy dies
In the cradle where it lies.
Let us all ring fancy's knell:
I'll begin it, — Ding, dong, bell.
All. Ding, dong, bell.

Bassanio. So may the outward shows be least themselves:
The world is still deceived with ornament.
In law, what plea so tainted and corrupt
But, being season'd with a gracious voice,

74. *still*, ever. 76. *gracious*, pleasing.

Obscures the show of evil? In religion,
What damnéd error, but some sober brow
Will bless it and approve it with a text,
Hiding the grossness with fair ornament?
There is no vice so simple but assumes
Some mark of virtue on his outward parts:
How many cowards, whose hearts are all as false
As stairs of sand, wear yet upon their chins
The beards of Hercules and frowning Mars,
Who, inward search'd, have livers white as milk;
And these assume but valour's excrement
To render them redoubted! Look on beauty,
And you shall see 'tis purchased by the weight;
Which therein works a miracle in nature,
Making them lightest that wear most of it:
So are those crispéd snaky golden locks
Which make such wanton gambols with the wind,
Upon supposéd fairness, often known
To be the dowry of a second head,
The skull that bred them in the sepulchre.
Thus ornament is but the guiléd shore
To a most dangerous sea; the beauteous scarf
Veiling an Indian beauty; in a word,

78. *some sober brow*, some one of grave appearance. 79. *approve*, confirm. 81. *simple*, absolute. 87. *excrement*, beard. 88. *redoubted*, redoubtable, terrible. 92. *crispéd*, curled. 94. *Upon supposéd fairness*, worn by fictitious beauty. 97. *guiléd*, treacherous.

The seeming truth which cunning times put on
To entrap the wisest. Therefore, thou gaudy gold,
Hard food for Midas, I will none of thee;
Nor none of thee, thou pale and common drudge
'Tween man and man: but thou, thou meagre lead,
Which rather threatenest than dost promise aught,
Thy paleness moves me more than eloquence;
And here choose I: joy be the consequence!

Portia. [*Aside*] How all the other passions fleet to air,
As doubtful thoughts, and rash-embraced despair,
And shuddering fear, and green-eyed jealousy!
O love, be moderate; allay thy ecstasy;
In measure rain thy joy; scant this excess.
I feel too much thy blessing: make it less,
For fear I surfeit.

Bassanio. What find I here?
[*Opening the leaden casket.*
Fair Portia's counterfeit! What demi-god
Hath come so near creation? Move these eyes?
Or whether, riding on the balls of mine,
Seem they in motion? Here are sever'd lips,
Parted with sugar breath: so sweet a bar

108. *fleet*, take flight. 109. *rash-embraced*, rashly embraced.
115. *counterfeit*, portrait.

Should sunder such sweet friends. Here in her hairs
The painter plays the spider and hath woven
A golden mesh to entrap the hearts of men
Faster than gnats in cobwebs: but her eyes, —
How could he see to do them? having made one,
Methinks it should have power to steal both his
And leave itself unfurnish'd. Yet look, how far
The substance of my praise doth wrong this shadow
In underprizing it, so far this shadow
Doth limp behind the substance. Here's the scroll,
The continent and summary of my fortune.

[*Reads*] You that choose not by the view,
Chance as fair and choose as true!
Since this fortune falls to you,
Be content and seek no new.
If you be well pleased with this
And hold your fortune for your bliss,
Turn you where your lady is
And claim her with a loving kiss.

A gentle scroll. Fair lady, by your leave;
I come by note, to give and to receive.
Like one of two contending in a prize,

126. *unfurnish'd*, unmatched with its fellow eye. 131. *continent*, the thing which contains. 142. *prize*, contest for a prize.

That thinks he hath done well in people's eyes,
Hearing applause and universal shout,
Giddy in spirit, still gazing in a doubt
Whether those peals of praise be his or no,
So, thrice-fair lady, stand I, even so;
As doubtful whether what I see be true,
Until confirm'd, sign'd, ratified by you.

Portia. You see me, Lord Bassanio, where I stand,
Such as I am: though for myself alone
I would not be ambitious in my wish,
To wish myself much better; yet, for you
I would be trebled twenty times myself;
A thousand times more fair, ten thousand times more rich;
That only to stand high in your account,
I might in virtues, beauties, livings, friends,
Exceed account; but the full sum of me
Is sum of — nothing, which, to term in gross,
Is an unlesson'd girl, unschool'd, unpractised;
Happy in this, she is not yet so old
But she may learn; happier than this,
She is not bred so dull but she can learn;
Happiest of all in that her gentle spirit
Commits itself to yours to be directed,
As from her lord, her governor, her king.
Myself and what is mine to you and yours
Is now converted: but now I was the lord
Of this fair mansion, master of my servants,

157. *livings*, estates. 160. *to term in gross*, to define generally.

Queen o'er myself; and even now, but now,
This house, these servants and this same myself
Are yours, my lord: I give them with this ring;
Which when you part from, lose, or give away,
Let it presage the ruin of your love
And be my vantage to exclaim on you.

Bassanio. Madam, you have bereft me of all words,
Only my blood speaks to you in my veins;
And there is such confusion in my powers
As, after some oration fairly spoke
By a beloved prince, there doth appear,
Among the buzzing pleaséd multitude;
Where every something, being blent together,
Turns to a wild of nothing, save of joy,
Express'd and not express'd. But when this ring
Parts from this finger, then parts life from hence:
O, then be bold to say Bassanio's dead!

Nerissa. My lord and lady, it is now our time,
That have stood by and seen our wishes prosper,
To cry, good joy: good joy, my lord and lady!

Gratiano. My lord Bassanio and my gentle lady,
I wish you all the joy that you can wish;
For I am sure you can wish none from me:
And when your honours mean to solemnize
The bargain of your faith, I do beseech you,
Even at that time I may be married too.

Bassanio. With all my heart, so thou canst get a wife.

180. *spoke*, spoken. 183. *blent*, blended. 197. *so*, provided that.

Gratiano. I thank your lordship, you have got me one.
My eyes, my lord, can look as swift as yours:
You saw the mistress, I beheld the maid;
You loved, I loved; for intermission
No more pertains to me, my lord, than you.
Your fortune stood upon the casket there,
And so did mine too, as the matter falls;
For wooing here until I sweat again,
And swearing till my very roof was dry
With oaths of love, at last, if promise last,
I got a promise of this fair one here
To have her love, provided that your fortune
Achieved her mistress.

Portia. Is this true, Nerissa?

Nerissa. Madam, it is, so you stand pleased withal.

Bassanio. And do you, Gratiano, mean good faith?

Gratiano. Yes, faith, my lord.

Bassanio. Our feast shall be much honour'd in your marriage. . . . . .

Gratiano. But who comes here? Lorenzo and his infidel?
What, and my old Venetian friend Salerio?

Enter Lorenzo, Jessica, *and* Salerio, *a messenger from Venice*

Bassanio. Lorenzo and Salerio, welcome hither;
If that the youth of my new interest here

201. *intermission*, delay, remissness. 224. *If that*, if.

Have power to bid you welcome. By your leave,
I bid my very friends and countrymen,
Sweet Portia, welcome.

Portia. So do I, my lord:
They are entirely welcome.

Lorenzo. I thank your honour. For my part, my lord,
My purpose was not to have seen you here;
But meeting with Salerio by the way,
He did entreat me, past all saying nay,
To come with him along.

Salerio. I did, my lord;
And I have reason for it. Signor Antonio
Commends him to you.

[*Gives Bassanio a letter.*

Bassanio. Ere I ope his letter,
I pray you, tell me how my good friend doth.

Salerio. Not sick, my lord, unless it be in mind;
Nor well, unless in mind: his letter there
Will show you his estate.

[*Bassanio opens the letter.*

Gratiano. Nerissa, cheer yon stranger; bid her welcome.
Your hand, Salerio: what's the news from Venice?
How doth that royal merchant, good Antonio?
I know he will be glad of our success;
We are the Jasons, we have won the fleece.

226. *very*, true. 239. *estate*, state, condition.

Saler. I would you had won the fleece that he hath lost.

Portia. There are some shrewd contents in yon same paper,
That steals the colour from Bassanio's cheek:
Some dear friend dead; else nothing in the world
Could turn so much the constitution
Of any constant mind. What, worse and worse!
With leave, Bassanio; I am half yourself,
And I must freely have the half of anything
That this same paper brings you.

Bassanio. O sweet Portia,
Here are a few of the unpleasantst words
That ever blotted paper! Gentle lady,
When I did first impart my love to you,
I freely told you, all the wealth I had
Ran in my veins, I was a gentleman;
And then I told you true: and yet, dear lady,
Rating myself at nothing, you shall see
How much I was a braggart. When I told you
My state was nothing, I should then have told you
That I was worse than nothing; for indeed
I have engaged myself to a dear friend,
Engaged my friend to his mere enemy,
To feed my means. Here is a letter, lady;

246. *shrewd*, evil. 249. *constitution*, temper of mind. 250. *constant*, self-possessed. 265. *mere*, pure, absolute.

The paper as the body of my friend,
And every word in it a gaping wound,
Issuing life-blood. But is it true, Salerio?
Have all his ventures fail'd? What, not one hit?
From Tripolis, from Mexico and England,
From Lisbon, Barbary and India?
And not one vessel scape the dreadful touch
Of merchant-marring rocks?

Salerio. Not one, my lord.
Besides, it should appear, that if he had
The present money to discharge the Jew,
He would not take it. Never did I know
A creature, that did bear the shape of man,
So keen and greedy to confound a man:
He plies the duke at morning and at night,
And doth impeach the freedom of the state,
If they deny him justice: twenty merchants,
The duke himself, and the magnificoes
Of greatest port, have all persuaded with him;
But none can drive him from the envious plea
Of forfeiture, of justice and his bond.

Jessica. When I was with him I have heard him swear
To Tubal and to Chus, his countrymen,
That he would rather have Antonio's flesh
Than twenty times the value of the sum

269. *Issuing*, emitting. 273. *scape*, escape. 283. *port*, station. 283. *persuaded*, argued. 284. *envious*, malicious.

That he did owe him: and I know, my lord,
If law, authority and power deny not,
It will go hard with poor Antonio.

Portia. Is it your dear friend that is thus in trouble?

Bassanio. The dearest friend to me, the kindest man,
The best-condition'd and unwearied spirit
In doing courtesies, and one in whom
The ancient Roman honour more appears
Than any that draws breath in Italy.

Portia. What sum owes he the Jew?

Bassanio. For me three thousand ducats.

Portia. What, no more?
Pay him six thousand, and deface the bond;
Double six thousand, and then treble that,
Before a friend of this description
Shall lose a hair thorough Bassanio's fault.
First go with me to church and call me wife,
And then away to Venice to your friend;
For never shall you lie by Portia's side
With an unquiet soul. You shall have gold
To pay the petty debt twenty times over:
When it is paid, bring your true friend along.
My maid Nerissa and myself meantime
Will live as maids and widows. Come, away!
For you shall hence upon your wedding-day:
Bid your friends welcome, show a merry cheer:

291. *deny*, forbid. 301. *deface*, cancel. 314. *cheer*, countenance.

Since you are dear bought, I will love you dear.
But let me hear the letter of your friend.

Bassanio. [*Reads*] Sweet Bassanio, my ships have all miscarried, my creditors grow cruel, my estate is very low, my bond to the Jew is forfeit; and since in paying it, it is impossible I should live, all debts are cleared between you and I. If I might but see you at my death: — notwithstanding, use your pleasure: if your love do not persuade you to come, let not my letter.

Portia. O love, dispatch all business, and be gone!

Bassanio. Since I have your good leave to go away,
I will make haste: but, till I come again,
No bed shall e'er be guilty of my stay,
No rest be interposer 'twixt us twain. [*Exeunt.*

Scene III. *Venice. A street*

Enter Shylock, Salarino, Antonio, *and* Jailor

Shylock. Jailor, look to him: tell not me of mercy;
This is the fool that lent out money gratis:
Jailor, look to him.

Antonio. Hear me yet, good Shylock.

Shylock. I'll have my bond; speak not against my bond:
I have sworn an oath that I will have my bond.
Thou call'dst me dog before thou hadst a cause;
But, since I am a dog, beware my fangs:

319. *forfeit*, forfeited.

The duke shall grant me justice. I do wonder,
Thou naughty jailor, that thou art so fond
To come abroad with him at his request.
Antonio. I pray thee, hear me speak.
Shylock. I'll have my bond; I will not hear thee speak:
I'll have my bond; and therefore speak no more.
I'll not be made a soft and dull-eyed fool,
To shake the head, relent, and sigh, and yield
To Christian intercessors. Follow not;
I'll have no speaking; I will have my bond.
[*Exit.*
Salarino. It is the most impenetrable cur
That ever kept with men.
Antonio. Let him alone:
I'll follow him no more with bootless prayers.
He seeks my life; his reason well I know:
I oft deliver'd from his forfeitures
Many that have at times made moan to me;
Therefore he hates me.
Salarino. I am sure the duke
Will never grant this forfeiture to hold.
Antonio. The duke cannot deny the course of law:
For the commodity that strangers have
With us in Venice, if it be denied,
Will much impeach the justice of his state;

9. *naughty*, worthless. 9. *fond*, foolish. 14. *dull-eyed*, wanting in perception. 19. *kept*, associated. 23. *made moan*, complained. 27. *commodity*, facility in trading.

Since that the trade and profit of the city
Consisteth of all nations. Therefore go:
These griefs and losses have so bated me,
That I shall hardly spare a pound of flesh
To-morrow to my bloody creditor.
Well, jailor, on. Pray God, Bassanio come
To see me pay his debt, and then I care not!

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV. *Belmont. A room in Portia's house*

Enter PORTIA, NERISSA, LORENZO, JESSICA, *and* BALTHASAR

Lorenzo. Madam, although I speak it in your presence,
You have a noble and a true conceit
Of god-like amity; which appears most strongly
In bearing thus the absence of your lord.
But if you knew to whom you show this honour,
How true a gentleman you send relief,
How dear a lover of my lord your husband,
I know you would be prouder of the work
Than customary bounty can enforce you.

Portia. I never did repent for doing good,
Nor shall not now: for in companions
That do converse and waste the time together,
Whose souls do bear an equal yoke of love,

32. *bated*, reduced, lowered. 2. *conceit*, idea, ideal. 7. *lover*, friend. 12. *waste*, spend.

There must be needs a like proportion
Of lineaments, of manners and of spirit;
Which makes me think that this Antonio,
Being the bosom lover of my lord,
Must needs be like my lord. If it be so,
How little is the cost I have bestow'd
In purchasing the semblance of my soul
From out the state of hellish misery!
This comes too near the praising of myself:
Therefore no more of it: hear other things.
Lorenzo, I commit into your hands
The husbandry and manage of my house
Until my lord's return: for mine own part,
I have toward heaven breathed a secret vow
To live in prayer and contemplation,
Only attended by Nerissa here,
Until her husband and my lord's return:
There is a monastery two miles off;
And there will we abide. I do desire you
Not to deny this imposition,
The which my love and some necessity
Now lays upon you.

Lorenzo. Madam, with all my heart:
I shall obey you in all fair commands.

Portia. My people do already know my mind,
And will acknowledge you and Jessica
In place of Lord Bassanio and myself.

15. *lineaments*, features. 25. *husbandry*, stewardship. 25. *manage*, management. 33. *imposition*, task imposed.

And so farewell, till we shall meet again.

Lorenzo. Fair thoughts and happy hours attend on you!

Jessica. I wish your ladyship all heart's content.

Portia. I thank you for your wish, and am well pleased
To wish it back on you: fare you well, Jessica.
[*Exeunt Jessica and Lorenzo.*
Now, Balthasar,
As I have ever found thee honest-true,
So let me find thee still. Take this same letter,
And use thou all the endeavour of a man
In speed to Padua: see thou render this
Into my cousin's hand, Doctor Bellario;
And, look, what notes and garments he doth give thee,
Bring them, I pray thee, with imagined speed
Unto the tranect, to the common ferry
Which trades to Venice. Waste no time in words,
But get thee gone: I shall be there before thee.

Balthasar. Madam, I go with all convenient speed.
[*Exit.*

Portia. Come on, Nerissa; I have work in hand
That you yet know not of: we'll see our husbands
Before they think of us.

53. *tranect*, crossing, place of ferriage.

Nerissa. Shall they see us?

Portia. They shall, Nerissa; but in such a habit,
That they shall think we are accomplished
With that we lack. I'll hold thee any wager,
When we are both accoutred like young men,
I'll prove the prettier fellow of the two,
And wear my dagger with the braver grace,
And speak between the change of man and boy
With a reed voice, and turn two mincing steps
Into a manly stride, and speak of frays
Like a fine bragging youth, and tell quaint lies,
How honourable ladies sought my love,
Which I denying, they fell sick and died;
I could not do withal; then I'll repent,
And wish, for all that, that I had not kill'd them;
And twenty of these puny lies I'll tell,
That men shall swear I have discontinued school
Above a twelvemonth. I have within my mind
A thousand raw tricks of these bragging Jacks,
Which I will practise. . . . . .
But come, I'll tell thee all my whole device
When I am in my coach, which stays for us
At the park gate; and therefore haste away,
For we must measure twenty miles to-day.

[*Exeunt.*

63. *accoutred*, dressed. 67. *mincing*, short, dainty. 77. *raw*, crude.

SCENE V. *The same. A garden*

Enter LAUNCELOT *and* JESSICA

Launcelot. Yes, truly; for, look you, the sins of the father are to be laid upon the children: therefore, I promise ye, I fear you. I was always plain with you, and so now I speak my agitation of the matter: therefore be of good cheer, for truly I think you are damned. There is but one hope in it that can do you any good; and that is but a kind of base hope neither.

Jessica. And what hope is that, I pray thee?

Launcelot. Marry, you may partly hope that . . . you are not the Jew's daughter.

Jessica. That were a kind of . . . hope, indeed: so the sins of my mother should be visited upon me.

Launcelot. Truly then I fear you are damned both by father and mother: thus when I shun Scylla, your father, I fall into Charybdis, your mother: well, you are gone both ways.

Jessica. I shall be saved by my husband; he hath made me a Christian.

Launcelot. Truly, the more to blame he: we were Christians enow before; e'en as many as could well live, one by another. This making of Christians will raise the price of hogs: if we grow all

5. *agitation*, for cogitation. 24. *enow*, enough.

to be pork-eaters, we shall not shortly have a rasher on the coals for money.

Enter LORENZO

Jessica. I'll tell my husband, Launcelot, what you say: here he comes.

Lorenzo. I shall grow jealous of you shortly, Launcelot. . . . . .

Jessica. Nay, you need not fear us, Lorenzo: Launcelot and I are out. He tells me flatly, there is no mercy for me in heaven, because I am a Jew's daughter: and he says, you are no good member of the commonwealth, for in converting Jews to Christians, you raise the price of pork.

. . . . . .

Lorenzo. I think the best grace of wit will shortly turn into silence, and discourse grow commendable in none only but parrots. Go in, sirrah, bid them prepare for dinner.

Launcelot. That is done, sir; they have all stomachs.

Lorenzo. Goodly Lord, what a wit-snapper are you! then bid them prepare dinner.

Launcelot. That is done too, sir; only 'cover' is the word.

Lorenzo. Will you cover then, sir?

54. *stomachs*, also meaning appetites. 57. '*cover*,' set the table, also put on your hat.

Launcelot. Not so, sir, neither; I know my duty.

Lorenzo. Yet more quarrelling with occasion! Wilt thou show the whole wealth of thy wit in an instant? I pray thee, understand a plain man in his plain meaning: go to thy fellows; bid them cover the table, serve in the meat, and we will come in to dinner.

Launcelot. For the table, sir, it shall be served in; for the meat, sir, it shall be covered; for your coming in to dinner, sir, why, let it be as humours and conceits shall govern. [*Exit.*

Lor. O dear discretion, how his words are suited!
The fool hath planted in his memory
An army of good words; and I do know
A many fools, that stand in better place,
Garnish'd like him, that for a tricksy word
Defy the matter. How cheer'st thou, Jessica?
And now, good sweet, say thy opinion,
How dost thou like the Lord Bassanio's wife?

Jessica. Past all expressing. It is very meet
The Lord Bassanio live an upright life;
For, having such a blessing in his lady,
He finds the joys of heaven here on earth;
And if on earth he do not mean it, then
In reason he should never come to heaven.
Why, if two gods should play some heavenly match

60. *occasion*, opportunity (of quibbling). 74. *tricksy*, tricky. 75. *cheer'st*, farest.

And on the wager lay two earthly women,
And Portia one, there must be something else
Pawn'd with the other, for the poor rude world
Hath not her fellow.

Lorenzo. Even such a husband
Hast thou of me as she is for a wife.

Jessica. Nay, but ask my opinion too of that.

Lorenzo. I will anon: first, let us go to dinner.

Jessica. Nay, let me praise you while I have a stomach.

Lorenzo. No, pray thee, let it serve for table-talk;
Then, howsoe'er thou speak'st, 'mong other things
I shall digest it.

Jessica. Well, I'll set you forth. [*Exeunt*

ACT IV

Scene I. *Venice. A court of justice*

Enter the Duke, *the* Magnificoes, Antonio, Bassanio, Gratiano, Salerio, *and others*

Duke. What, is Antonio here?

Antonio. Ready, so please your grace.

Duke. I am sorry for thee: thou art come to answer

87. *Pawn'd*, wagered. 89. *of me*, in me. 92. *stomach*, an appetite, here also the courage.

A stony adversary, an inhuman wretch
Uncapable of pity, void and empty
From any dram of mercy.

Antonio. I have heard
Your grace hath ta'en great pains to qualify
His rigorous course; but since he stands obdurate
And that no lawful means can carry me
Out of his envy's reach, I do oppose
My patience to his fury, and am arm'd
To suffer, with a quietness of spirit,
The very tyranny and rage of his.

Duke. Go one, and call the Jew into court.

Salerio. He is ready at the door: he comes, my lord.

Enter SHYLOCK

Duke. Make room, and let him stand before our face.
Shylock, the world thinks, and I think so too,
That thou but lead'st this fashion of thy malice
To the last hour of act; and then 'tis thought
Thou'lt show thy mercy and remorse more strange
Than is thy strange apparent cruelty;
And where thou now exact'st the penalty,
Which is a pound of this poor merchant's flesh,
Thou wilt not only loose the forfeiture,

7. *ta'en*, taken. 7. *qualify*, modify. 10. *envy's*, malice's. 20. *remorse*, relenting. 22. *where*, whereas. 24. *loose*, remit.

But, touch'd with human gentleness and love,
Forgive a moiety of the principal;
Glancing an eye of pity on his losses,
That have of late so huddled on his back,
Enow to press a royal merchant down
And pluck commiseration of his state
From brassy bosoms and rough hearts of flint,
From stubborn Turks and Tartars, never train'd
To offices of tender courtesy.
We all expect a gentle answer, Jew.

Shylock. I have possess'd your grace of what I purpose
And by our holy Sabbath have I sworn
To have the due and forfeit of my bond:
If you deny it, let the danger light
Upon your charter and your city's freedom.
You'll ask me, why I rather choose to have
A weight of carrion flesh than to receive
Three thousand ducats: I'll not answer that:
But say, it is my humour: is it answer'd?
What if my house be troubled with a rat,
And I be pleased to give ten thousand ducats
To have it baned? What, are you answer'd yet?
Some men there are love not a gaping pig;
Some, that are mad if they behold a cat;
Some, when they hear the bag-pipe sings i'th nose:

26. *moiety*, a part, not necessarily half. 29. *Enow*, enough. 35. *possess'd*, informed. 46. *baned*, poisoned.

. . . . . for affection,
Master of passion, sways it to the mood
Of what it likes or loathes. Now, for your answer:
As there is no firm reason to be render'd,
Why he cannot abide a gaping pig;
Why he, a harmless necessary cat;
Why he, a woollen bag-pipe; but of force
Must yield to such inevitable shame
As to offend, himself being offended;
So can I give no reason, nor I will not,
More than a lodged hate and a certain loathing
I bear Antonio, that I follow thus
A losing suit against him. Are you answer'd?

Bassanio. This is no answer, thou unfeeling man,
To excuse the current of thy cruelty.

Shylock. I am not bound to please thee with my answers.

Bassanio. Do all men kill the things they do not love?

Shylock. Hates any man the thing he would not kill?

Bassanio. Every offence is not a hate at first.

Shylock. What, wouldst thou have a serpent sting thee twice?

Antonio. I pray you, think, you question with the Jew:

53. *firm*, sound. 68. *offence*, resentment, also affront. 70. *question*, argue.

You may as well go stand upon the beach
And bid the main flood bate his usual height;
You may as well use question with the wolf
Why he hath made the ewe bleat for the lamb;
You may as well forbid the mountain pines
To wag their high tops and to make no noise,
When they are fretten with the gusts of heaven;
You may as well do anything most hard,
As seek to soften that — than which what's harder? —
His Jewish heart: therefore, I do beseech you,
Make no more offers, use no farther means,
But with all brief and plain conveniency
Let me have judgement and the Jew his will.

Bassanio. For thy three thousand ducats here is six.

Shylock. If every ducat in six thousand ducats
Were in six parts and every part a ducat,
I would not draw them; I would have my bond.

Duke. How shalt thou hope for mercy, rendering none?

Shylock. What judgment shall I dread, doing no wrong?
You have among you many a purchased slave,
Which, like your asses and your dogs and mules,
You use in abject and in slavish parts,
Because you bought them: shall I say to you,
Let them be free, marry them to your heirs?

72. *main flood*, the ocean's tide. 77. *fretten*, fretted. 82. *conveniency*, suitability. 83. *judgement*, sentence.

Why sweat they under burthens? let their beds
Be made as soft as yours and let their palates
Be season'd with such viands? You will answer
'The slaves are ours:' so do I answer you:
The pound of flesh, which I demand of him,
Is dearly bought; 'tis mine and I will have it.
If you deny me, fie upon your law!
There is no force in the decrees of Venice.
I stand for judgement: answer; shall I have it?

Duke. Upon my power I may dismiss this court,
Unless Bellario, a learned doctor,
Whom I have sent for to determine this,
Come here to-day.

Salerio. My lord, here stays without
A messenger with letters from the doctor,
New come from Padua.

Duke. Bring us the letters; call the messenger.

Bassanio. Good cheer, Antonio! What, man, courage yet!
The Jew shall have my flesh, blood, bones, and all,
Ere thou shalt lose for me one drop of blood.

Antonio. I am a tainted wether of the flock,
Meetest for death: the weakest kind of fruit
Drops earliest to the ground; and so let me:
You cannot better be employ'd, Bassanio,
Than to live still and write mine epitaph.

104. *Upon my power*, on my authority. 106. *determine*, decide. 118. *still*, yet.

Enter NERISSA, *dressed like a lawyer's clerk*

Duke. Came you from Padua, from Bellario? 119

Nerissa. From both, my lord. Bellario greets your grace. [*Presenting a letter.*

Bassanio. Why dost thou whet thy knife so earnestly?

Shylock. To cut the forfeiture from that bankrupt there.

Gratiano. Not on thy sole, but on thy soul, harsh Jew,
Thou makest thy knife keen; but no metal can,
No, not the hangman's axe, bear half the keenness
Of thy sharp envy. Can no prayers pierce thee?

Shylock. No, none that thou hast wit enough to make.

Gratiano. O, be thou damn'd, inexecrable dog!
And for thy life let justice be accused.
Thou almost makest me waver in my faith 130
To hold opinion with Pythagoras,
That souls of animals infuse themselves
Into the trunks of men: thy currish spirit
Govern'd a wolf, who hang'd for human slaughter,
Even from the gallows did his fell soul fleet,

125. *hangman's*, executioner's. 126. *envy*, malice. 128. *inexerable*, that can not be execrated enough. 135. *fleet*, flit, take flight.

And, whilst thou lay'st in thy unhallow'd dam,
Infused itself in thee; for thy desires
Are wolvish, bloody, starved and ravenous.

Shylock. Till thou canst rail the seal from off my bond,
Thou but offend'st thy lungs to speak so loud:
Repair thy wit, good youth, or it will fall
To cureless ruin. I stand here for law.

Duke. This letter from Bellario doth commend
A young and learned doctor to our court.
Where is he?

Nerissa. He attendeth here hard by,
To know your answer, whether you'll admit him.

Duke. With all my heart. Some three or four of you
Go give him courteous conduct to this place.
Meantime the court shall hear Bellario's letter.

Clerk. [*Reads*] Your grace shall understand that at the receipt of your letter I am very sick: but in the instant that your messenger came, in loving visitation was with me a young doctor of Rome; his name is Balthasar. I acquainted him with the cause in controversy between the Jew and Antonio the merchant: we turned o'er many books together: he is furnished with my opinion; which, bettered with his own learning, the great-

140. *offend'st*, annoyst. 142. *cureless*, past restoring. 153. *loving*, friendly.

ness whereof I cannot enough commend, comes with him, at my importunity, to fill up your grace's request in my stead. I beseech you, let his lack of years be no impediment to let him lack a reverend estimation; for I never knew so young a body with so old a head. I leave him to your gracious acceptance, whose trial shall better publish his commendation.

Duke. You hear the learn'd Bellario, what he writes:
And here, I take it, is the doctor come.

Enter PORTIA, *dressed like a doctor of laws*

Give me your hand. Came you from old Bellario?

Portia. I did, my lord.

Duke. You are welcome: take your place.
Are you acquainted with the difference
That holds this present question in the court?

Portia. I am informed throughly of the cause.
Which is the merchant here, and which the Jew?

Duke. Antonio and old Shylock, both stand forth.

Portia. Is your name Shylock?

Shylock. Shylock is my name.

Portia. Of a strange nature is the suit you follow;
Yet in such rule that the Venetian law

160. *fill up*, fulfil. 165. *whose*, for his. 171. *difference*, dispute. 173. *throughly*, thoroughly. 178. *in such rule*, so according to form.

Cannot impugn you as you do proceed.
You stand within his danger, do you not?
Antonio. Ay, so he says.
Portia. Do you confess the bond?
Antonio. I do.
Portia. Then must the Jew be merciful.
Shylock. On what compulsion must I? tell me that
Portia. The quality of mercy is not strain'd,
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath; it is twice blest;
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes:
'Tis mightiest in the mightiest: it becomes
The thronéd monarch better than his crown;
His sceptre shows the force of temporal power,
The attribute to awe and majesty,
Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings;
But mercy is above this sceptred sway;
It is enthronéd in the hearts of kings,
It is an attribute to God himself;
And earthly power doth then show likest God's
When mercy seasons justice. Therefore, Jew,
Though justice be thy plea, consider this,
That, in the course of justice, none of us
Should see salvation: we do pray for mercy;
And that same prayer doth teach us all to ren-
der

180. *danger*, power, control. 186. *twice blest*, endowed with double blessing. 190. *shows*, is the emblem of. 196. *show*, appear. 201. *render*, give as in duty bound.

The deeds of mercy. I have spoke thus much
To mitigate the justice of thy plea;
Which if thou follow, this strict court of Venice
Must needs give sentence 'gainst the merchant there.

Shylock. My deeds upon my head! I crave the law:
The penalty and forfeit of my bond.

Portia. Is he not able to discharge the money?

Bassanio. Yes, here I tender it for him in the court;
Yea, twice the sum: if that will not suffice,
I will be bound to pay it ten times o'er,
On forfeit of my hands, my head, my heart:
If this will not suffice, it must appear
That malice bears down truth. And I beseech you,
Wrest once the law to your authority:
To do a great right, do a little wrong,
And curb this cruel devil of his will.

Portia. It must not be; there is no power in Venice
Can alter a decree established:
'Twill be recorded for a precedent,
And many an error by the same example
Will rush into the state: it cannot be.

Shylock. A Daniel come to judgement! yea, a Daniel!
O wise young judge, how I do honour thee!

202. *spoke*, spoken. 214. *truth*, honesty, honour.

Portia. I pray you, let me look upon the bond.
Shylock. Here 'tis, most reverend doctor, here it is.
Portia. Shylock, there's thrice thy money offer'd thee.
Shylock. An oath, an oath, I have an oath in heaven:
Shall I lay perjury upon my soul?
No, not for Venice.
Portia. Why, this bond is forfeit;
And lawfully by this the Jew may claim
A pound of flesh, to be by him cut off
Nearest the merchant's heart. Be merciful:
Take thrice thy money; bid me tear the bond.
Shylock. When it is paid according to the tenor.
It doth appear you are a worthy judge;
You know the law, your exposition
Hath been most sound: I charge you by the law,
Whereof you are a well-deserving pillar,
Proceed to judgement: by my soul I swear
There is no power in the tongue of man
To alter me: I stay here on my bond.
Antonio. Most heartily I do beseech the court
To give the judgement.
Portia. Why then, thus it is
You must prepare your bosom for his knife.
Shylock. O noble judge! O excellent young man!
Portia. For the intent and purpose of the law

242. *on*, in dependence on.

Hath full relation to the penalty
Which here appeareth due upon the bond.
Shylock. 'Tis very true: O wise and upright judge!
How much more elder art thou than thy looks!
Portia. Therefore lay bare your bosom.
Shylock. Ay, his breast:
So says the bond: doth it not, noble judge?
'Nearest his heart:' those are the very words.
Portia. It is so. Are there balance here to weigh
The flesh?
Shylock. I have them ready.
Por. Have by some surgeon, Shylock, on your charge,
To stop his wounds, lest he do bleed to death.
Shylock. Is it so nominated in the bond?
Portia. It is not so express'd: but what of that?
'Twere good you do so much for charity.
Shylock. I cannot find it; 'tis not in the bond.
Portia. You, merchant, have you anything to say?
Antonio. But little: I am arm'd and well prepared.
Give me your hand, Bassanio: fare you well!
Grieve not that I am fallen to this for you;
For herein Fortune shows herself more kind
Than is her custom: it is still her use
To let the wretched man outlive his wealth,
To view with hollow eye and wrinkled brow
An age of poverty; from which lingering penance

257. *on your charge*, at your expense. 268. *still her use*, ever her custom.

Of such a misery doth she cut me off.
Commend me to your honourable wife:
Tell her the process of Antonio's end;
Say how I love you, speak me fair in death;
And, when the tale is told, bid her be judge
Whether Bassanio had not once a love.
Repent but you that you shall lose your friend,
And he repents not that he pays your debt;
For if the Jew do cut but deep enough,
I'll pay it presently with all my heart.

Bassanio. Antonio, I am married to a wife
Which is as dear to me as life itself;
But life itself, my wife, and all the world,
Are not with me esteem'd above thy life:
I would lose all, ay, sacrifice them all
Here to this devil, to deliver you.

Portia. [*Aside*] Your wife would give you little thanks for that,
If she were by, to hear you make the offer.

Gratiano. I have a wife, whom, I protest, I love:
I would she were in heaven, so she could
Entreat some power to change this currish Jew.

Nerissa. [*Aside*] 'Tis well you offer it behind her back;
The wish would make else an unquiet house.

Shylock. [*Aside*] These be the Christian husbands.
I have a daughter;

274. *process*, manner. 277. *love*, lover, dear friend. 278. *repent*, regret. 281. *presently*, at once. 283. *Which*, who.

Would any of the stock of Barrabas
Had been her husband rather than a Christian!
[*Aloud*] We trifle time: I pray thee, pursue sentence.

Portia. A pound of that same merchant's flesh is thine:
The court awards it, and the law doth give it.

Shylock. Most rightful judge!

Portia. And you must cut this flesh from off his breast:
The law allows it, and the court awards it.

Shylock. Most learned judge! A sentence! Come, prepare!

Portia. Tarry a little; there is something else.
This bond doth give thee here no jot of blood;
The words expressly are 'a pound of flesh:'
Take then thy bond, take thou thy pound of flesh;
But, in the cutting it, if thou dost shed
One drop of Christian blood, thy lands and goods
Are, by the laws of Venice, confiscate
Unto the state of Venice.

Gratiano. O upright judge! Mark, Jew: O learned judge!

Shylock. Is that the law?

Portia. Thyself shalt see the act:
For, as thou urgest justice, be assured
Thou shalt have justice, more than thou desirest.

311. *confiscate*, confiscated.

Gratiano. O learned judge! Mark, Jew: a learned judge!

Shylock. I take his offer, then; pay the bond thrice
And let the Christian go.

Bassanio. Here is the money.

Portia. Soft!
The Jew shall have all justice; soft! no haste:
He shall have nothing but the penalty.

Gratiano. O Jew! an upright judge, a learned judge!

Portia. Therefore prepare thee to cut off the flesh.
Shed thou no blood, nor cut thou less nor more
But just a pound of flesh: if thou cut'st more
Or less than a just pound, be it but so much
As makes it light or heavy in the substance,
Or the division of the twentieth part
Of one poor scruple, nay, if the scale do turn
But in the estimation of a hair,
Thou diest and all thy goods are confiscate.

Gratiano. A second Daniel, a Daniel, Jew!
Now, infidel, I have you on the hip.

Portia. Why doth the Jew pause? take thy forfeiture.

Shylock. Give me my principal, and let me go.

Bassanio. I have it ready for thee; here it is.

Portia. He hath refused it in the open court:
He shall have merely justice and his bond.

Gratiano. A Daniel, still say I, a second Daniel!
I thank thee, Jew, for teaching me that word.

Shylock. Shall I not have barely my principal?
Portia. Thou shalt have nothing but the forfeiture,
To be so taken at thy peril, Jew.
Shylock. Why, then the devil give him good of it!
I'll stay no longer here in question.
Portia. Tarry, Jew:
The law hath yet another hold on you.
It is enacted in the laws of Venice,
If it be proved against an alien
That by direct or indirect attempts
He seek the life of any citizen,
The party 'gainst the which he doth contrive
Shall seize one half his goods; the other half
Comes to the privy coffer of the state;
And the offender's life lies in the mercy
Of the duke only, 'gainst all other voice.
In which predicament, I say, thou stand'st;
For it appears, by manifest proceeding,
That indirectly and directly too
Thou hast contrived against the very life
Of the defendant; and thou hast incurr'd
The danger formerly by me rehearsed.
Down therefore and beg mercy of the duke.
Gratiano. Beg that thou mayst have leave to hang thyself:
And yet, thy wealth being forfeit to the state,

352. *the which*, whom. 352. *contrive*, plot. 353. *seize*, take possession of. 360. *the very life*, life itself. 362. *formerly*, above.

Thou hast not left the value of a cord;
Therefore thou must be hang'd at the state's charge.

Duke. That thou shalt see the difference of our spirits,
I pardon thee thy life before thou ask it:
For half thy wealth, it is Antonio's;
The other half comes to the general state,
Which humbleness may drive unto a fine.

Portia. Ay, for the state, not for Antonio.

Shylock. Nay, take my life and all; pardon not that:
You take my house when you do take the prop
That doth sustain my house; you take my life
When you do take the means whereby I live.

Portia. What mercy can you render him, Antonio?

Gratiano. A halter gratis; nothing else, for God's sake.

Antonio. So please my lord the duke and all the court
To quit the fine for one half of his goods,
I am content; so he will let me have
The other half in use, to render it,
Upon his death, unto the gentleman
That lately stole his daughter:
Two things provided more, that, for this favour,
He presently become a Christian;

366. *left*, remaining. 378. *render*, return. 387. *presently*, at once.

The other, that he do record a gift,
Here in the court, of all he dies possess'd,
Unto his son Lorenzo and his daughter.

Duke. He shall do this, or else I do recant
The pardon that I late pronouncéd here.

Portia. Art thou contented, Jew? what dost thou say?

Shylock. I am content.

Portia. Clerk, draw a deed of gift.

Shylock. I pray you, give me leave to go from hence;
I am not well: send the deed after me,
And I will sign it.

Duke. Get thee gone, but do it.

Gratiano. In christening shalt thou have two godfathers.
Had I been judge, thou shouldst have had ten more,
To bring thee to the gallows, not the font.

[*Exit Shylock.*

Duke. Sir, I entreat you home with me to dinner.

Portia. I humbly do desire your grace of pardon:
I must away this night toward Padua,
And it is meet I presently set forth.

Duke. I am sorry that your leisure serves you not.
Antonio, gratify this gentleman,
For, in my mind, you are much bound to him.

[*Exeunt Duke and his train.*

389. *possess'd*, possessed of. 391. *recant*, revoke. 406. *gratify*, recompense.

Bassanio. Most worthy gentleman, I and my friend
Have by your wisdom been this day acquitted
Of grievous penalties; in lieu whereof,
Three thousand ducats, due unto the Jew,
We freely cope your courteous pains withal.
Antonio. And stand indebted, over and above,
In love and service to you evermore.
Portia. He is well paid that is well satisfied;
And I, delivering you, am satisfied
And therein do account myself well paid:
My mind was never yet more mercenary.
I pray you, know me when we meet again:
I wish you well, and so I take my leave.
Bassanio. Dear sir, of force I must attempt you further:
Take some remembrance of us, as a tribute,
Not as a fee: grant me two things, I pray you,
Not to deny me, and to pardon me.
Portia. You press me far, and therefore I will yield.
[*To Antonio*] Give me your gloves, I'll wear them for your sake;
[*To Bassanio*] And, for your love, I'll take this ring from you:
Do not draw back your hand; I'll take no more;
And you in love shall not deny me this.
Bassanio. This ring, good sir, alas, it is a trifle!
I will not shame myself to give you this.

412. *cope*, meet, requite. 412. *withal* = with. 421. *of force*, of necessity. 431. *shame*, disgrace. 431. *to give*, by giving.

Portia. I will have nothing else but only this ;
And now methinks I have a mind to it.
Bassanio. There's more depends on this than on the value.
The dearest ring in Venice will I give you,
And find it out by proclamation :
Only for this, I pray you, pardon me.
Portia. I see, sir, you are liberal in offers :
You taught me first to beg ; and now methinks
You teach me how a beggar should be answer'd.
Bassanio. Good sir, this ring was given me by my wife ;
And when she put it on, she made me vow
That I should neither sell nor give nor lose it.
Portia. That scuse serves many men to save their gifts.
An if your wife be not a mad-woman,
And know how well I have deserved the ring,
She would not hold out enemy for ever,
For giving it to me. Well, peace be with you!
[*Exeunt Portia and Nerissa.*
Antonio. My Lord Bassanio, let him have the ring :
Let his deservings and my love withal
Be valued 'gainst your wife's commandement.
Bassanio. Go, Gratiano, run and overtake him ;
Give him the ring, and bring him, if thou canst,

444. *scuse*, excuse. 445. *An if* = if. 451. *commandement* commandment.

Unto Antonio's house: away! make haste.
[*Exit Gratiano.*
Come, you and I will thither presently;
And in the morning early will we both
Fly toward Belmont: come, Antonio. [*Exeunt.*

Scene II. *The same. A street*

Enter Portia *and* Nerissa

Portia. Inquire the Jew's house out, give him this deed
And let him sign it: we'll away to-night
And be a day before our husbands home:
This deed will be well welcome to Lorenzo.

Enter Gratiano

Gratiano. Fair sir, you are well o'erta'en:
My Lord Bassanio upon more advice
Hath sent you here this ring, and doth entreat
Your company at dinner.
Portia. That cannot be:
His ring I do accept most thankfully:
And so, I pray you, tell him: furthermore,
I pray you, show my youth old Shylock's house.
Gratiano. That will I do.
Nerissa. Sir, I would speak with you.
[*Aside to Portia*] I'll see if I can get my husband's ring,

455. *presently*, at once. 5. *o'erta'en*, overtaken.

Which I did make him swear to keep for ever.

Portia. [*Aside to Nerissa*] Thou may'st, I warrant.
We shall have old swearing
That they did give the rings away to men;
But we'll outface them, and outswear them too.
[*Aloud*] Away! make haste: thou know'st where
I will tarry.

Nerissa. Come, good sir, will you show me to this
house? [*Exeunt.*

ACT V

Scene I. *Belmont. Avenue to Portia's house*

Enter Lorenzo *and* Jessica

Lorenzo. The moon shines bright: in such a night
as this,
When the sweet wind did gently kiss the trees
And they did make no noise, in such a night
Troilus methinks mounted the Troyan walls
And sigh'd his soul toward the Grecian tents,
Where Cressid lay that night.

Jessica. In such a night
Did Thisbe fearfully o'ertrip the dew
And saw the lion's shadow ere himself
And ran dismay'd away.

Lorenzo. In such a night
Stood Dido with a willow in her hand 10

Upon the wild sea banks and waft her love
To come again to Carthage.

Jessica. In such a night
Medea gather'd the enchanted herbs
That did renew old Æson.

Lorenzo. In such a night
Did Jessica steal from the wealthy Jew
And with an unthrift love did run from Venice
As far as Belmont.

Jessica. In such a night
Did young Lorenzo swear he loved her well,
Stealing her soul with many vows of faith
And ne'er a true one.

Lorenzo. In such a night
Did pretty Jessica, like a little shrew,
Slander her love, and he forgave it her.

Jessica. I would out-night you, did no body come;
But, hark, I hear the footing of a man.

Enter Stephano

Lorenzo. Who comes so fast in silence of the night?

Stephano. A friend.

Lorenzo. A friend! what friend? your name, I pray you, friend?

Stephano. Stephano is my name; and I bring word
My mistress will before the break of day
Be here at Belmont: she doth stray about

11. *waft*, wafted. 16. *unthrift*, unthrifty.

By holy crosses, where she kneels and prays
For happy wedlock hours.

Lorenzo. Who comes with her?

Stephano. None but a holy hermit and her maid.
I pray you, is my master yet return'd?

Lorenzo. He is not, nor we have not heard from him.
But go we in, I pray thee, Jessica,
And ceremoniously let us prepare
Some welcome for the mistress of the house.

Enter LAUNCELOT

Launcelot. Sola, sola! wo ha, ho! sola, sola!

Lorenzo. Who calls?

Launcelot. Sola! did you see Master Lorenzo? Master Lorenzo, sola, sola!

Lorenzo. Leave hollaing, man: here.

Launcelot. Sola! where? where?

Lorenzo. Here.

Launcelot. Tell him there's a post come from my master, with his horn full of good news: my master will be here ere morning. [*Exit.*

Lorenzo. Sweet soul, let's in, and there expect their coming.
And yet no matter: why should we go in?
My friend Stephano, signify, I pray you,
Within the house, your mistress is at hand;

46. *post*, courier.

And bring your music forth into the air.
[*Exit Stephano.*
How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank!
Here will we sit and let the sounds of music
Creep in our ears: soft stillness and the night
Become the touches of sweet harmony.
Sit, Jessica. Look how the floor of heaven
Is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold:
There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st
But in his motion like an angel sings,
Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubins;
Such harmony is in immortal souls;
But whilst this muddy vesture of decay
Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it.

Enter Musicians

Come, ho! and wake Diana with a hymn:
With sweetest touches pierce your mistress' ear
And draw her home with music. [*Music.*

Jessica. I am never merry when I hear sweet music.

Lorenzo. The reason is, your spirits are attentive:
For do but note a wild and wanton herd,
Or race of youthful and unhandled colts,
Fetching mad bounds, bellowing and neighing loud,
Which is the hot condition of their blood;
If they but hear perchance a trumpet sound,

62. *still*, continually. 62. *quiring*, singing in concert. 65. *close . . in*, enclose.

Or any air of music touch their ears,
You shall perceive them make a mutual stand,
Their savage eyes turn'd to a modest gaze
By the sweet power of music: therefore the poet
Did feign that Orpheus drew trees, stones and floods;
Since nought so stockish, hard and full of rage,
But music for the time doth change his nature.
The man that hath no music in himself,
Nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds,
Is fit for treasons, stratagems and spoils;
The motions of his spirit are dull as night
And his affections dark as Erebus:
Let no such man be trusted. Mark the music.

Enter PORTIA *and* NERISSA

Portia. That light we see is burning in my hall.
How far that little candle throws his beams!
So shines a good deed in a naughty world.
Nerissa. When the moon shone, we did not see the candle.
Portia. So doth the greater glory dim the less:
A substitute shines brightly as a king
Until a king be by, and then his state
Empties itself, as doth an inland brook
Into the main of waters. Music! hark!
Nerissa. It is your music, madam, of the house.

77. *mutual*, common. 85. *spoils*, acts of rapine. 91. *naughty*, worthless.

Portia. Nothing is good, I see, without respect:
Methinks it sounds much sweeter than by day.
Nerissa. Silence bestows that virtue on it, madam.
Portia. The crow doth sing as sweetly as the lark
When neither is attended, and I think
The nightingale, if she should sing by day,
When every goose is cackling, would be thought
No better a musician than the wren.
How many things by season season'd are
To their right praise and true perfection!
Peace, ho! the moon sleeps with Endymion
And would not be awaked. [*Music ceases.*
Lorenzo. That is the voice,
Or I am much deceived, of Portia.
Portia. He knows me as the blind man knows the cuckoo,
By the bad voice.
Lorenzo. Dear lady, welcome home.
Portia. We have been praying for our husbands' healths,
Which speed, we hope, the better for our words.
Are they return'd?
Lorenzo. Madam, they are not yet;
But there is come a messenger before,
To signify their coming.
Portia. Go in, Nerissa;
Give order to my servants that they take

99. *without respect*, absolutely, without relation to circumstances.
103. *attended*, heeded, marked.

No note at all of our being absent hence;
Nor you, Lorenzo; Jessica, nor you.

[*A tucket sounds.*

Lorenzo. Your husband is at hand; I hear his trumpet:
We are no tell-tales, madam; fear you not.

Portia. This night methinks is but the daylight sick;
It looks a little paler: 'tis a day,
Such as the day is when the sun is hid.

Enter BASSANIO, ANTONIO, GRATIANO, *and their followers*

Bassanio. We should hold day with the Antipodes,
If you would walk in absence of the sun.

Portia. Let me give light, but let me not be light;
For a light wife doth make a heavy husband,
And never be Bassanio so for me:
But God sort all! You are welcome home, my lord.

Bassanio. I thank you, madam. Give welcome to my friend.
This is the man, this is Antonio,
To whom I am so infinitely bound.

Portia. You should in all sense be much bound to him,
For, as I hear, he was much bound for you.

Antonio. No more than I am well acquitted of.

130. *heavy*, sad.

Portia. Sir, you are very welcome to our house:
It must appear in other ways than words,
Therefore I scant this breathing courtesy.
Gratiano. [*To Nerissa*] By yonder moon I swear you do me wrong;
In faith, I gave it to the judge's clerk:
Would he were dead that had it, for my part,
Since you do take it, love, so much at heart.
Portia. A quarrel, ho, already! what's the matter?
Gratiano. About a hoop of gold, a paltry ring
That she did give me, whose posy was
For all the world like cutler's poetry
Upon a knife, 'Love me, and leave me not.'
Nerissa. What talk you of the posy or the value?
You swore to me, when I did give it you,
That you would wear it till your hour of death
And that it should lie with you in your grave:
Though not for me, yet for your vehement oaths,
You should have been respective and have kept it.
Gave it a judge's clerk! no, God's my judge,
The clerk will ne'er wear hair on's face that had it.
Gratiano. He will, an if he live to be a man.
Nerissa. Ay, if a woman live to be a man.
Gratiano. Now, by this hand, I gave it to a youth,
A kind of boy, a little scrubbed boy,

156. *respective*, mindful. 159. *an if* = if. 162. *scrubbed*, stunted, undergrown.

No higher than thyself, the judge's clerk,
A prating boy, that begg'd it as a fee:
I could not for my heart deny it him.

Portia. You were to blame, I must be plain with you,
To part so slightly with your wife's first gift;
A thing stuck on with oaths upon your finger
And so riveted with faith unto your flesh.
I gave my love a ring and made him swear
Never to part with it; and here he stands;
I dare be sworn for him he would not leave it
Nor pluck it from his finger, for the wealth
That the world masters. Now, in faith, Gratiano,
You give your wife too unkind a cause of grief:
An 'twere to me, I should be mad at it.

Bassanio. [*Aside*] Why, I were best to cut my left hand off
And swear I lost the ring defending it.

Gratiano. My Lord Bassanio gave his ring away
Unto the judge that begg'd it and indeed
Deserved it too: and then the boy, his clerk,
That took some pains in writing, he begg'd mine;
And neither man nor master would take aught
But the two rings.

Portia. What ring gave you, my lord?
Not that, I hope, which you received of me.

176. *An 'twere*, if it were.

Bassanio. If I could add a lie unto a fault,
I would deny it; but you see my finger
Hath not the ring upon it; it is gone.
Portia. Even so void is your false heart of truth.
By heaven, I will never be your wife
Until I see the ring.
Nerissa. No, nor I yours
Till I again see mine.
Bassanio. Sweet Portia,
If you did know to whom I gave the ring,
If you did know for whom I gave the ring
And would conceive for what I gave the ring
And how unwillingly I left the ring,
When nought would be accepted but the ring,
You would abate the strength of your displeasure.
Portia. If you had known the virtue of the ring,
Or half her worthiness that gave the ring,
Or your own honour to contain the ring,
You would not then have parted with the ring.
What man is there so much unreasonable,
If you had pleased to have defended it
With any terms of zeal, wanted the modesty
To urge the thing held as a ceremony?
Nerissa teaches me what to believe:
I'll die for't but some woman had the ring.
Bassanio. No, by my honour, madam, by my soul,

199. *virtue*, power. 201. *contain*, retain, safe keep. 205. *modesty*, moderation.

No woman had it, but a civil doctor,
Which did refuse three thousand ducats of me
And begg'd the ring; the which I did deny him
And suffer'd him to go displeased away;
Even he that did uphold the very life
Of my dear friend. What should I say, sweet lady?
I was enforced to send it after him;
I was beset with shame and courtesy;
My honour would not let ingratitude
So much besmear it. Pardon me, good lady;
For, by these blessed candles of the night,
Had you been there, I think you would have begg'd
The ring of me to give the worthy doctor.

Portia. Let not that doctor e'er come near my house:
Since he hath got the jewel that I loved,
And that which you did swear to keep for me,
I will become as liberal as you;
I'll not deny him anything I have. . . . .

Nerissa. [Nor] I his clerk; therefore be well advised
How you do leave me to mine own protection.

Gratiano. Well, do you so: let not me take him then;
For if I do, I'll mar the young clerk's pen.

210. *civil doctor*, doctor of civil law. 211. *Which*, who. 212. *the which*, which. 234. *well advised*, very careful.

Antonio. I am the unhappy subject of these quarrels.

Portia. Sir, grieve not you; you are welcome notwithstanding.

Bassanio. Portia, forgive me this enforcéd wrong; 240
And, in the hearing of these many friends,
I swear to thee, even by thine own fair eyes,
Wherein I see myself —

Portia. Mark you but that!
In both my eyes he doubly sees himself;
In each eye, one: swear by your double self,
And there's an oath of credit.

Bassanio. Nay, but hear me:
Pardon this fault, and by my soul I swear
I never more will break an oath with thee.

Antonio. I once did lend my body for his wealth; 250
Which, but for him that had your husband's ring,
Had quite miscarried: I dare be bound again,
My soul upon the forfeit, that your lord
Will never more break faith advisedly.

Portia. Then you shall be his surety. Give him this
And bid him keep it better than the other.

Antonio. Here, Lord Bassanio; swear to keep this ring.

Bassanio. By heaven, it is the same I gave the doctor!

245. *double*, twofold, also full of duplicity. 249. *wealth*, well-being. 250. *Which*, *i.e.* my body. 253. *advisedly*, deliberately.

Portia. I had it of him: pardon me, Bassanio;

. . . . . .

Nerissa. And pardon me, my gentle Gratiano,
For that same scrubbed boy, the doctor's clerk.

. . . . . .

Gratiano. Why, this is like the mending of highways
In summer, where the ways are fair enough.

. . . . . .

Portia. . . . . . You are all amazed:
Here is a letter: read it at your leisure;
It comes from Padua, from Bellario:
There you shall find that Portia was the doctor,
Nerissa there her clerk: Lorenzo here
Shall witness I set forth as soon as you
And even but now return'd: I have not yet
Enter'd my house. Antonio, you are welcome;
And I have better news in store for you
Than you expect: unseal this letter soon;
There you shall find three of your argosies
Are richly come to harbour suddenly:
You shall not know by what strange accident
I chancéd on this letter.

Antonio. I am dumb.

Bassanio. Were you the doctor and I knew you not?

Gratiano. Were you the clerk and yet I knew you not? . . . . . .

Antonio. Sweet lady, you have given me life and living;

277. *richly*, with rich freight. 277. *suddenly*, unexpectedly.

For here I read for certain that my ships
Are safely come to road.

Portia. How now, Lorenzo!
My clerk hath some good comforts too for you.

Nerissa. Ay, and I'll give them him without a fee.
There do I give to you and Jessica,
From the rich Jew, a special deed of gift,
After his death, of all he dies possess'd of.

Lorenzo. Fair ladies, you drop manna in the way
Of starvéd people.

Portia. It is almost morning,
And yet I am sure you are not satisfied
Of these events at full. Let us go in;
And charge us there upon inter'gatories,
And we will answer all things faithfully.

Gratiano. Let it be so. . . . . .
Well, while I live I'll fear no other thing
So sore as keeping safe Nerissa's ring.

[*Exeunt.*

288. *road*, harbour. 298. *inter'gatories*, interrogatories.

NOTES

ACT I. SCENE I

The opening passages of a play must put the reader in possession of the essentials on which the plot is based : the place, the circumstances, and the relation of the persons who are to figure in the story. The title has already conveyed to our minds the place, Venice : to the ears of the contemporaries of Shakespeare, the celebrated mart of the East, a synonym for political power, opulence, and glittering barbaric profusion. A merchant of Venice was thus no ordinary man ; but, as Antonio is later called, a "royal merchant," one whose dealings were with kings, and on a scale of magnitude and splendour. In this opening scene the keynote is struck in Antonio's unreasoning sadness; and the circumstance that he has many ships on many seas, together with the thought of the risks of such ventures, is impressed on the reader's mind. Then follows the entrance of Bassanio with his friends, the merry mood of Gratiano contrasting with the melancholy of Antonio ; and the scene ends with Bassanio's confession of his hopes as to Portia, and Antonio's generous offer of his credit to further them. We have in this scene Antonio in doubt as to his argosies abroad, but staunch in his friendship ; and we have Bassanio embarked on his project, the winning of Portia. It is out of these two circumstances that the two main stories of the drama grow.

Shylock, as the name of a Jew, was known in prose tracts and in a ballad of Shakespeare's time. Its origin may have been in the Italian name, *Scialocca*,

4. *stuff.* Compare *Tempest*, iv. 1. 156:

"We are such stuff
As dreams are made on."

5. *I am* [yet] *to learn*, is the fuller modern phrase. Elizabethan English often thus omits a word. Compare *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, ii. 1. 59.

8. *ocean.* Pronounced as three syllables.

9. *argosies.* An *argosy* was usually a large merchantman; and the word was probably derived from the town of Ragusa or Arragosa, which enjoyed a large trade with England in the sixteenth century.

11. *pageants.* The pageant was the stage on which the old popular plays were acted in the streets. The word was often used of the plays themselves. Shakespeare here likens the lofty merchantmen with sails spread to these tall and decorated structures.

13. *curtsy.* "Suggested by the rocking, ducking motion in the petty traffiquers caused by the wake of the argosy as it sails past them" (Furness).

15. *venture.* What is risked in a merchant's voyage.

18. *Plucking the grass*, to test the direction of the wind by dropping it from the hand.

25. *hour-glass.* An hour-glass, placed near the pulpit, was commonly used to mark the duration of the sermon in Shakespeare's day.

27. *Andrew*, the name of the ship.

35. *worth this.* The thought is probably here completed by a gesture of the actor.

50. *Janus*, the Roman guardian deity of gates, represented with two heads because every door looks two ways.

56. *Nestor*, the oldest and hence the gravest of the heroes.

67. *You grow exceeding strange.* Compare the modern, "You are becoming quite a stranger."

67. *must it be so?* Must you really go? or, perhaps, Must you continue such a stranger?

74. *You have too much respect upon the world.* You have too much regard for the world's opinion.

75. *They lose it.* *It* here refers to the opinion of the world.

78. *a stage*, etc. Compare the famous passage: "All the world's a stage," *As You Like It*, ii. 7. 139.

79. *play the fool.* The fool, with his cap, bells, and bauble, was a favourite character in the old comedy.

84. *grandsire cut in alabaster*, an allusion to the tombs of old time, of which a stone or alabaster figure of the deceased formed a conspicuous part.

85. *jaundice.* This disease was supposed to cause everything to appear yellow to the person afflicted with it. Compare *Troilus and Cressida*, i. 3. 2.

89. *cream and mantle*, thicken in scum on the surface and completely cover. Notice the Elizabethan freedom which compels the noun, without change in form, to do service as a verb.

93. *As who shall say*, in modern phrase, "As if one should say." An old idiom very common in Shakespeare. See below, i. 2. 50.

93. *I am, sir, an oracle.* This is the reading of the *folios;* the *quartos* read *Sir Oracle.*

96, 97. *reputed wise For saying nothing.* Compare *Proverbs*, xvii. 28: "Even a fool when he holdeth his peace is counted wise; and he that shutteth his lips is esteemed a man of understanding."

98. *If they should speak*, [they] *would, etc.* Shakespeare often omits the nominative when the sense will easily supply it, as here. See *Hamlet*, ii. 2. 67; iii. 1. 8. This passage contains an allusion to *Matthew*, v. 22: "Whosoever shall say to his brother . . . 'Thou fool,' shall be in danger of hell fire."

101. *melancholy bait, i.e.* melancholy as a bait.

125. *continuance, i.e.* continuance of.

126. *make moan to be abridged*, complain that I am cut short.

137. *Within the eye of honour*, within the limits of what can be considered honourable.

139. *occasions*, to be pronounced as four syllables. The terminations *ion* and *ian* are commonly pronounced as two syllables; see *ocean* above, i. 1. 8.

141. *fellow of the self-same flight*, an arrow of the same length, weight, and feathering, calculated to carry the same distance.

143. *To find the other forth*, to find out the other. Compare *Comedy of Errors*, i. 2. 37. This line is two syllables longer than the usual decasyllabic line of English blank verse; but it runs easily off the tongue in precisely the interval of time required for a verse of ten syllables. Shakespeare wrote for the ear, and not for the eye; and these "irregularities," as they are sometimes called, are not only true to the speech of his day, but are often real beauties from the variety which they give to the versification.

145. *pure innocence*, childish foolishness. Bassanio is anxious that his friend, Antonio, shall understand that he himself fully appreciates the real folly of his plan to throw good money after bad.

156. *In making question of my uttermost*, in doubting my readiness to do my utmost in your service.

165, 166. *nothing undervalued To . . . Brutus' Portia, i.e.* when brought to the side of, and compared with Brutus's Portia. See below, ii. 7. 53. Portia, wife of Brutus, a woman of renown for her greatness of spirit, figures in Shakespeare's *Julius Cæsar*.

171. *Colchos' strand*, in allusion to the story of Jason, the famous leader of the Argonauts, who sought and found the golden fleece in Colchos by the aid of Medea, whom he made his wife and brought back to Greece.

175. *a mind presages*. Note the omission of the relative, a common Shakespearian idiom. See *Measure for Measure*, ii. 2. 23; *Richard II*, ii. 2. 128.

185. *of my trust or for my sake*, in consequence of my credit or for the sake of my friendship.

ACT I. SCENE II

Belmont. Most of the directions as to place and scene in the plays of Shakespeare have been added by modern editors. In the old editions the reader was left to infer both from the words of the text. Belmont is supposed to have been situated near the Brenta, a fair stream of the continent, on the banks of which were many of the palaces of the magnificoes of Venice. The highway from Venice to Padua must have run near.

In this scene we learn the conditions under which Portia can alone be won, and find her heart-whole as to any of her suitors. But Portia is not wholly fancy-free, for on Nerissa's mention of "a Venetian, a scholar and a soldier, that came hither in company of the Marquis of Montferrat," and "in your father's time," Portia remembers his name, Bassanio, and that he "was worthy of thy praise." This touch shows Bassanio no mere adventurer, but a gentleman accredited by his station in a nobleman's train and by the acceptance of Portia's own father; and prepares us for what might otherwise seem that lady's sudden and unaccountable preference for Bassanio.

7, 8. *no mean happiness . . . in the mean.* It is no happiness to be despised, therefore, to be stationed in life between the extremes of poverty and overabundant wealth. Shakespeare shared with his age a fondness for playing on words. See below, lines 26, 27, the *will* [wish, desire] of a living daughter curbed by the *will* [testament] of a dead father.

28. *cannot choose one nor refuse none.* In modern English, "Can neither choose one nor refuse any." *Nor* is often used after *not.* See *Macbeth*, ii. 3. 69: "Tongue nor heart cannot conceive nor name thee." For the double negative, see *King John*, v. 7. 112.

35. *No doubt you will never be chosen, etc.* Compare Portia's words to Bassanio, below (iii. 2. 41): "If you do love me, you will find me out." This is the reading of the first quarto of *The Merchant of Venice;* that of the folio is inferior.

44. *a colt*, a wild, headstrong youth. As the Neapolitans were notably skilled in horsemanship in Shakespeare's day, there is a play on the word *colt*.

50. *as who should say*. Compare i. 1. 93, above, and the note thereon.

51. '*If you will not have me, choose*' [whom you will, and regret your choice]. The sense is plainly: "Whom could you think of choosing beside such a paragon as I?"

53. *the weeping philosopher*, Heraclitus of Ephesus, who flourished about 500 B.C.

58. *How say you by the French lord*. What say you with reference to, etc. See below, ii. 9. 26: "*By* the fool multitude"; and compare the phrase: "Do as you would be done *by*" [*i.e.* with reference to].

66. *a capering*. *A* is often equal to "on" before verbal nouns. Compare *King Lear*, v. 3. 274: "The slave that was a hanging there."

73. Portia playfully twists Nerissa's word, *say*, into a different sense.

76. *a poor pennyworth in the English*, little knowledge of the English tongue.

80. *doublet . . . round hose*. The doublet was the close-fitting jacket worn by men in Shakespeare's day. The familiar figure, Punch, still wears a doublet. Round hose were trousers made very large and sometimes stuffed, or "bombasted," as it was called, to make them stand out.

81. *bonnet*, commonly used for a man's hat. See *Richard II*, i. 4. 31: "Off goes his bonnet to an oyster-wench."

88. *the Frenchman became his surety*. In allusion to the assistance frequently offered by France to Scotland in her quarrels with England, before the union of the two countries under Elizabeth's successor, King James.

89. *sealed under for another* [box on the ear]. The principal, or person entering into a bond, was said to "seal to" the bond;

his surety, *i.e.* the man who agreed to pay the debt if the principal did not, was said to "seal under."

100. *you should refuse to perform*, in modern usage, "You would refuse." *Should* is the past tense of *shall*, and has undergone the same modifications of meaning. *Should* is not now used with the second person to denote mere futurity, because it suggests a duty if not a compulsion. But we retain this use of *should* in the conditional clause, "If you should refuse," because there can be no question of compulsion in that case. Shakespeare did not make this distinction.

109. *the having*. The article often precedes a verbal noun when the latter is followed by an object, as here. Compare *Macbeth*, i. 4, 7: "Nothing in his life Became him like the leaving it."

113. *by some other sort*, by some other method or manner.

114. *your father's imposition*, the condition imposed by your father.

116. *Sibylla*, used erroneously by Shakespeare as a proper name. There were several prophetic women known as sibyls in ancient times. Of them the Cumæan sibyl, consulted by Æneas, was the most famous. It was this sibyl that obtained from Apollo a promise that her years should be as many as the grains of sand she was holding in her hand.

134. *four strangers*, six were enumerated. The plays of Shakespeare's time were subject to constant revision, and sometimes little inadvertences, such as this, remain. There may have been but four suitors named in an earlier version of this play.

140, 141. *so . . . as*. *As* is a contraction of *all-so* (*alse*, *als*, *as*). We still say: "As I expected so it happened." The Elizabethans frequently used the reverse order. See *Romeo and Juliet*, i. 1. 140: "All so soon as."

146, 147. It is a common device of plays of this time to end a scene with a rhyming couplet, as here. This has been supposed by some to offer a cue to the opening of a new scene, but as such rhyming tags occur elsewhere this is not certain.

ACT I. SCENE III

"Shylock enters with slow, shuffling gait; restless, half-closed eyes, and the fingers of his disengaged hand (one holds a staff) ever moving, as if from the constant habit of feeling and caressing the ducats that are passing through them" (Booth). The Jews of Venice were distinguished by orange-tawny and scarlet and black hats, as they were Levantine or Italian Jews. In Shakespeare's day Shylock was probably represented in the costume of the English Jews and money-lenders of that time, a more or less sombre gown or gaberdine, furred in winter, covering the customary doublet and hose, and perhaps distinguished by some such cap as that just mentioned. The addition of earrings, which were commonly worn by men in Shakespeare's day, and of finger and thumb rings would be quite in keeping. Shylock leans on a staff not because he is infirm, but because of a premature stoop, the result of much leaning over his desk and money-bags.

In this scene the bargain is struck between Shylock and Antonio, and the exposition, as it is called, — that part of a play that makes clear the circumstances on which the story is founded and the relations of the characters, — is complete. Shylock's hatred of Antonio is fully set forth, but not without Antonio's plain avowal, on the other hand, of the contempt and insult with which he had always treated the Jew. It is Antonio that is made to suggest the loan as made not to a friend, but to an enemy; but it is Shylock who after all has guided the whole transaction and who suggests the "merry sport," a forfeit of a pound "of your fair flesh." In Bassanio's words: "You shall not seal," and "I like not fair terms and a villain's mind," we have the foreboding and dramatic foreshadowing of Shylock's terrible claim to come.

1. *ducats.* A Venetian ducat was a gold coin varying in value, but worth roughly about an American dollar.

4. *the which*, the article is frequently thus employed to make

clearer the reference to its antecedent, where it would not be so used in modern English. See below, iii. 4. 34, and compare the phrases, "at the least, at the length."

7. *May you stead me?* Are you willing to assist me?

18. *in supposition*, doubtful because exposed to the hazards of the sea.

18. *argosy*, see above, i. 1. 9.

20. *the Rialto*, "an eminent [*i.e.* lofty] place in Venice," says Florio (*Italian Dictionary*, 1611), "where marchants commonly meete," as on the Exchange at London.

25. *pirates*, a very real peril of the sea, especially of the Mediterranean, in Shakespeare's day.

35. See *Matthew*, viii. 32: "And when they [the devils] were come out, they went into the herd of swine."

42. *fawning publican*. The thought in Shakespeare's mind here is evidently the contrast in *Luke*, xviii. 10–14, between the publican and the pharisee, Shylock showing the contempt of the latter for the publican's attitude of humility.

46. *usance*, interest. "It is almost incredible what gain the Venetians receive by the usury of the Jews, both privately and in common. For in every city the Jews keep open shops of usury, taking gages of ordinary for fifteen in the hundred by the year [*i.e.* charging interest at the rate of fifteen per cent]." Thomas's *Historye of Italye*, 1561. See also Bacon's *Essay on Usurie*, in which such popular sayings as "the usurer is a drone," that "it is against nature for money to beget money," and that "usurers should have orange-tawny bonnets because they do judaize," are quoted with the sensible comment: "For since there must be borrowing and lending, and men are so hard of heart as [that] they will not lend freely [without interest], usury must be permitted."

47. *catch . . . upon the hip*, a wrestlers' phrase for "to have at a disadvantage." See below, iv. 1. 334.

52. *interest*, a word conveying insult, like others concerning the trade of money-lending.

60. *Rest you fair, good signior.* Shylock, turning from his words addressed to Bassanio, affects surprise and addresses Antonio obsequiously but with a tone of irony in his voice.

63. *excess,* the amount above the actual sum loaned, the interest.

72. *When Jacob, etc.* See *Genesis,* xxx.

74. *As* [For so] *his wise mother.* See *Genesis,* xxvii.

79. *were compromised,* had come to a mutual agreement.

95. *inserted, i.e.* in the Scriptures.

97. *I make it* [*i.e.* money] *breed.* Compare the words quoted from Bacon above line 46.

98–103. *Mark you this, etc.* Antonio speaks aside to Bassanio while Shylock pretends to be considering their proposition.

99. *The devil can cite Scripture.* See *Matthew,* iv. 4, 6, where *Psalm,* xci. is so quoted.

108. *Rialto.* See above, i. 3, 20.

109. *my moneys and my usances,* my practice of lending money at interest.

112. *call* [are in the habit of calling] *me . . . dog.*

113. *Jewish gaberdine.* It does not appear that the gaberdine was distinctively a mark of Jewish costume. It means here doubtless no more than Shylock's outer garment or cloak.

131. In a ruder age such acts as these, self-confessed by Antonio, would be regarded as natural if not meritorious as against a despised and hated race. None the less in these two lines Shakespeare has contrived at once to give the reason for Shylock's later implacability and to stir in every kindly heart a certain amount of sympathy for the Jew's outrageous wrongs.

135. *A breed of barren metal, i.e.* interest derived from money, a thing which, according to Antonio's ideas, should not be made to breed. The phrase alludes to Shylock's illustration of usury from the Bible, and is an additional insult to the Jew. Notice that the notion of lending "to thine enemy" is first put into words by Antonio.

137. *Who, if he break.* The use of the relative with no verb to

follow as here was not infrequent. See Bacon, *Advancement of Learning*: "Which though it be not true, yet I forbear to note any deficiencies."

138. *Why, look you, etc.* Shylock controls himself lest he lose the loan, and with it the opportunity of revenge.

141. *doit,* a trifling coin worth about half a farthing, or the fourth of an American cent.

146. *single bond,* literally a bond to which no condition is attached. "Give me your bond without any condition, — at least, none worthy of the name or to be legally enforced, — though for the joke of the thing we will say that I am to have a pound of your flesh if you fail to pay up at the appointed time" (Rolfe).

153. *I'll seal.* Addressed to Bassanio.

162. *dealings teaches.* It is not uncommon to find thus apparently the singular verb used with a plural subject. The form of the verb in many of these cases is really an old northern plural in *es.*

162. *teaches them* [to] *suspect.* The omission of *to* before the infinitive is very common. See below, ii. 7. 43: "To come view fair Portia."

164. *break his day,* fail to pay on the appointed day.

168. *muttons, beefs.* Both of these plurals are elsewhere used by Shakespeare.

171. *for my love,* in consideration of the kindness I now show you, do not impute any wrong motives to me.

176. *fearful guard,* a guard about whose trustworthiness fear is to be entertained.

ACT II. SCENE I.

The old stage direction reads: "Enter Morochus a tawnie Moore all in white, and three or foure followers accordingly, with Portia, Nerrissa, and their traine. Flo[urish of] Cornets." *Tawnie* was a yellowish dark color. *All in white* alludes to the appropriate cos-

tume of the Moor. The Prince of Morocco enters to the sound (*flourish*) of martial music. This scene represents only the preliminary meeting of Portia and the Prince; his choice is deferred to Scene VII of this act.

7. *reddest*, the superlative was often used as a comparative. Compare *1 Henry VI*, ii. 4. 14: "Between two horses which doth bear him best." Red blood was considered a proof of courage.

8. *aspect*. Stress on the last syllable, like many other Elizabethan words, now pronounced with the accent on the first.

13. *In terms of choice*, in the matter of choosing [a husband].

19. *His wife who wins*. The possessive formerly, having the greater powers of a genitive case, could be used as the antecedent of a relative, as here.

20, 21. *as fair As any*. This absolutely truthful statement of Portia (who means that the Prince, were she free to choose, stands as fair a chance of winning her as any of the suitors whom she has already refused) conveys a very different meaning to his majesty of Morocco; who, taking it to himself — as it was intended that he should — thanks Portia for her civility. Notice the play on the word *fair*, which means on equal terms with the rest, but also refers to the Prince's color, which Portia assures him is not to bar him from an equal chance with other *fairer* suitors.

25. *Sophy*, commonly used to denote the ruler of Persia, though originally meaning only a wise man.

26. *Solyman* was the greatest Sultan of Shakespeare's century. A romantic drama like this does not demand historical accuracy in its references. But this allusion is doubtless to Solyman's disastrous campaign against the Persians in 1535.

31. *alas the while!* literally, "Alas for the present condition of things!" Here equal to *alas!*

32. *Hercules and Lichas*. Lichas was the servant and hence the *page* (line 35 below) of Hercules, who, unknowing, brought that hero the garment poisoned with the blood of the Centaur, Nessus, by the wearing of which Hercules lost his life.

35. *Alcides.* Hercules was so called from his stepfather's father, Alcæus.

43. *Nor will not.* A double negative in a negative sense, meaning, Nor will I speak to lady afterward, etc. See above, i. 2. 28: "Nor refuse none."

44. *to the temple*, the place in which the Prince's choice of the caskets was to be made; perhaps no more than a temple-like structure in which the caskets were placed.

46. *blest or cursed'st*, most blessed or most cursed. It is no uncommon idiom of Elizabethan writers thus "to attach terminations to one adjective which affect others." Compare *Measure for Measure*, iv. 6. 13: "The generous and gravest citizens."

ACT II. SCENE II

The old stage direction reads: "Enter the Clowne alone." This term, like the term *fool*, was carelessly employed in Shakespeare's time. Launcelot is neither a fool nor a clown within the strict meaning of either word. The student is advised not to try too narrowly to make sober sense out of Shakespeare's inimitable nonsense. Logic is not Launcelot's forte; and as to some of his phrases, we may well echo Dr. Furness's warning in the words of Bottom: "Man is but an ass if he go about to expound this." In this scene Launcelot changes his service from Shylock to Bassanio, and Gratiano is granted his suit to accompany Bassanio to Belmont.

9. *scorn running with thy heels.* To scorn a thing with the heels, to kick at it, was a proverbial saying. Compare *Much Ado About Nothing*, iii. 4. 51: "I scorn that with my heels."

11. *Via!* Italian for *away!* and very commonly employed.

12. *for the heavens*, for heaven's sake.

17. *did something smack* [of the knave]. . . *grow to*, has been explained as "a household phrase applied to milk when burnt to the bottom of the saucepan, and thence acquiring an unpleasant taste."

25. *God bless* [or save] *the mark*, is used as a parenthetical excuse for the use of a profane or disrespectful word. Launcelot is here waggishly apologizing for using the word *devil*. Compare the clause, "Saving your reverence," below, line 27, used in precisely the same manner.

29. *incarnal*, Launcelot means *incarnate*. The "nice derangement of epitaphs," as Mrs. Malaprop afterwards called this use of a word of similar sound but of different sense for ludicrous effect, is very common in the old drama.

37. *sand-blind*, purblind, half-blind. Compare *stone-blind*, wholly blind; *high-gravel-blind* is of course Launcelot's jest.

39. *confusions*, Launcelot's word for *conclusions*; but Launcelot's conclusions are confusions, as the rest of this interview discloses.

44. *marry*, originally *Mary*, a remnant like *by'r Lady* (*by our Lady*), *God's sonties* below, and *dear me* (*Deus meus*) of a ruder age in which everyday conversation was interlarded with oaths. These terms had by Shakespeare's day ceased to have more force than mere exclamatory phrases or expletives.

47. *sonties*. Variously derived from *sanctities* or from *saints*, *saunties*, little saints. Compare *by'r Lakin*, "by our Ladikin."

55. *well to live*, with every prospect of living long.

58. *Your worship's friend and Launcelot, sir*. Launcelot whimsically endeavours to get his father to speak of him as Master Launcelot, which his father is unwilling to do out of respect for his "worship," whom he thinks he is addressing.

59. *But I pray you*, ergo, *old man*. Launcelot is not without some sense of the meaning of the learned word which he uses. *I pray you, ergo* [for that reason, because he is my worship's friend, call him] *Master Launcelot*. But enough: Launcelot is trying his "confusions" on us as well as on his father.

64. *father*, a general term used in addressing old men. Gobbo does not as yet recognize his mischievous son.

82. *give me your blessing*. Here, according to an old stage

tradition, Launcelot kneels with his back to his father, who, groping about, touches his son's long hair, and mistaking it for a beard, of which Launcelot has no sign, says, "Pray you, sir, stand up: I am sure you are not Launcelot, my boy." See below lines 86–91.

110. *set up my rest*, a phrase taken from the fashionable game of primero, signifying, to stand by the cards one has in one's hand; and hence to determine, make up one's mind.

115. *give me* [*i.e.* for my benefit] *your present.* The old dative of the personal pronoun is often used where we should use *for me* or *to me*; sometimes where the word would seem unnecessary to the modern reader. Compare the phrase, "Do me a favour."

115. *your present.* Old Gobbo is the bearer of a gift from the country to Shylock, Launcelot's master. This gift Launcelot diverts to Bassanio, with whom he desires to take service.

119. *I am a Jew.* An asseveration used elsewhere. Compare *Much Ado About Nothing*, ii. 3. 272: "If I do not love her, I am a Jew."

121. The old editions read, "Enter Bassanio with a follower or two."

123. *put the liveries to making*, have the liveries made. The old termination *en* was often confused with *ing* in Elizabethan English.

128. *Gramercy!* French *grand merci*, much thanks.

139. *cater-cousins*, a word of doubtful derivation and original meaning, applied to persons on intimate terms with each other, and used occasionally as if synonymous with cousins-germain. It has been thought that the word is connected with *cate* or *cake*, and *caterer;* and means *mess-fellows.*

158. *The old proverb.* Launcelot alludes to the saying, "The grace of God is gear [wealth] enough."

166. *Well, if any man, etc.* *Table* is the palm of the hand in chiromancy or palmistry. Take the relative *which* as referring to *table* and in the causal relation equivalent to *for it doth.* The

meaning of the passage then is: There is no hand in Italy offering fairer signs of palmistry than mine, for it doth offer to swear upon a book that I shall have good fortune.

169. *Go to*, equivalent to our *Come, come*. *To* is here an adverb. Compare its use to "to and fro," and the nautical expressions, "heave to, come to."

169. *a simple line of life*, literally a mean, poor line of life. But Launcelot is speaking ironically in reference to his good fortune. The *line of life* is the circular line surrounding the thumb. The *table line* or *line of fortune* runs from the forefinger, below the other three fingers, to the side of the hand. Launcelot pretends to be reading his own fortune by palmistry, and discovers that he is to be married fifteen times, and other like matters.

178. Notice how the play falls again into blank verse with the departure of the low comedy of Launcelot from the scene.

196. *skipping spirit*. We should say vivacious or frivolous temper. Compare *1 Henry IV*, iii. 2. 60: "The skipping king, he ambled up and down." *Spirit* is pronounced as one syllable. See below, v. 1. 86.

202, 203. *hood mine eyes Thus with my hat*. Hats were commonly worn by all persons of station at dinner. To take off the hat, except for courtesy in company, was an acknowledgment of inferiority.

205. *ostent*, appearance. Compare below, ii. 8. 44: "Fair ostents of love."

ACT II. SCENE III

2. *Our house is hell*. Jessica is distraught between her love for Lorenzo and her religion and duty to her father, hence the extravagance of her words.

5. *soon at supper*. Compare *Richard III*, iv. 3. 31.

10. *tears exhibit my tongue*, tears show what my tongue would express but for them.

16. *what heinous sin, i.e.* sinfulness.

19. *Lorenzo.* The story of Jessica's elopement is apparently of Shakespeare's own invention. Its purpose is plainly to offer strong additional reasons, — the stealing of his daughter and his ducats by another Christian, — for Shylock's implacability as to Antonio and his bond.

ACT II. SCENE IV

Gratiano is arranging with his friends to entertain Bassanio with a mask to celebrate his departure for Belmont. See a similar entertainment in *Henry VIII*, i. 4. Masquerading was common in the England as in the Venice of Shakespeare's day.

1. *in*, during, at. Compare below, v. 1. 1: "In such a night as this."

5. *spoke us yet of torch-bearers*, bespoken, or made arrangements for torch-bearers.

10. *break up*, break open, of a sealed letter. Compare *The Winter's Tale*, iii. 2. 132: "Break up the seals and read."

24. *provided of a torch-bearer*, with a torch-bearer. *Of* is used in Elizabethan English not only of the agent, but of the instrument. Compare below, v. 1. 296: "You are not satisfied *Of* these events."

ACT II. SCENE V

This scene gives us briefly the relation of Shylock and Jessica; his faith in her, shown in his entrusting to her his keys; but his mistrust of her levity in his injunction concerning the maskers, and his premonition of coming evil. The scene also completes, by means of Launcelot's hint concerning the mask, Jessica's plan to run away with Lorenzo.

3. *What, Jessica! What*, like *why* and *when*, was used as an exclamation of impatience. Compare below, v. 1. 151: "What talk you of the posy."

3. *gormandize*, the thrifty Shylock and the indolent, careless

Launcelot would have very different ideas on this subject. See above, ii. 2. 113, Launcelot's complaint that he was famished.

14. *to feed upon The prodigal Christian.* This change in Shylock's earlier determination not to eat with a Christian is due to his purpose of revenge.

18. *money-bags.* Dreams go by contraries.

18. *to-night*, here *last night*, although sometimes used in the modern sense, as below, line 37 of this scene.

21. *So do I his* [reproach]. Shylock takes Launcelot's word *reproach*, intended for *approach*, in its actual sense.

25. *a-bleeding.* Bleeding at the nose was formerly regarded as an indication of coming misfortune.

25. *Black-Monday.* Easter Monday, so called because of a violent winter storm, April 14, 1360, in which many of the soldiers of King Edward III, then besieging Paris, perished of cold.

30. *wry-neck'd fife*, variously explained as a fife with a wry or crooked neck, or as applying to the fife player, "a wry-necked musician, for he always looks away from his instrument."

33. *varnish'd faces.* In allusion to the varnished and painted masks worn by masqueraders.

36. *Jacob's staff.* Though popularly used of a pilgrim's staff in general, the word here has reference to *Genesis*, xxxii. 10 and *Hebrews*, xi. 21.

37. *no mind of feasting forth*, no inclination to feast from home. See below, iv. 1. 402: "I humbly do desire your grace of pardon." Observe the use of *forth* as an adverb; and compare *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, ii. 2. 276: "Her husband will be *forth*."

44. *Hagar's offspring*, *i.e.* son of a bondswoman. *Genesis*, xvi.

46. *patch*, used as a nickname for a jester, is probably derived from the motley or patched coat of the professional fool. Notice the touch of kindliness in Shylock's allusion to Launcelot, and that at the very moment when Jessica is deceiving him with a deliberate lie.

48. *the wild-cat*, which prowls by night and sleeps all day.

52. *Perhaps I will*, in modern English *shall*. Shylock did not feel perfect confidence in Jessica.

56. Note the rhyming couplet which marks the conclusion of a scene, although here the stage setting remains the same, and the action proceeds at once to Jessica's elopement.

ACT II. SCENE VI

1. *pent-house*, a shed hanging out aslope of the main building.

2. This line, like many others, especially in the earlier work of Shakespeare, is too long, according to the metrical scheme of English blank verse. As a matter of fact, Shakespeare frequently employs, in the midst of the usual lines of five accents, lines which contain six, and which are known as Alexandrines. This is more often to be met where the dialogue is broken (that is, where the line is divided between two speakers) than elsewhere. In such cases we had better follow the advice of Dr. Furness, and "forego the pleasure of adjusting the rhythm of fragments of lines. As long as each fragment is in itself rhythmical, I doubt," continues the editor of the *Variorum Shakespeare*, "if Shakespeare troubled himself to piece them together."

5. *Venus' pigeons*, doves were sacred to Venus, the goddess of beauty. See *Tempest*, iv. 1. 92:

> "I met her deity
> Cutting the clouds towards Paphos, and her son
> Dove-drawn with her."

7. *obligéd*, pronounced as three syllables. The termination *ed* was commonly pronounced in Shakespeare's day, although sometimes contracted. See below, in this scene, *chaséd*, line 13; *scarféd*, line 15; and *placéd*, line 57.

9. *sits down* [with].

10. *untread again*, retrace, repeat in reverse order; said to allude to a horse trained to perform tricks, as in a circus.

17. See *Luke*, xv. 11–32.

24. *I'll watch as long, etc.* This line contains but nine syllables. But the pause after *then* takes up one of them, and the line becomes perfectly metrical.

I'll watch as long for you then. (´) Approach.

This is no uncommon device where there is a change in the thought, as here. Shakespeare, be it repeated, wrote for the ear and not for the eye, nor yet for the fingers. Compare *Measure for Measure*, ii. 2. 115–117:

"Thou rather with thy sharp and sulphurous bolt
Split'st the unwedgeable and gnarled oak
Than the soft myrtle: (´) but man, proud man, etc."

30. *who love I.* *Who* for *whom*, as frequently in Shakespeare. This license extended to all the personal pronouns. Compare below, iii. 2. 321: "All debts are cleared between you and I."

35. *exchange*, change of costume to that of a boy.

41–50. *What, must I, etc.* *Shames*, in modern English *shame*. They in themselves [*i.e.* my shames] are only too manifest. Why, [a torch-bearer's] office [is one] of discovery, for he bears a light; I should be thrown into the dark. There is a play in this passage on both the words *light* and *obscure*. Jessica is far more concerned about her appearance in boy's clothes than about leaving her father and robbing him.

42. *too too*, the reduplication of the adverb for emphasis is very common. Compare *Hamlet*, i. 2. 129: "O, that this too too solid flesh would melt."

47. *play the runaway*, is hurrying away.

51. *by my hood.* Gratiano swears appropriately by the masquerader's hood with which he is disguised.

51. *Gentile*, a heathen, with a play on the word *gentle*, one well born.

Much difficulty has been experienced in assigning the period of time during which the action of the play is supposed to take place. And this difficulty arises from the circumstance that Shakespeare hurries or retards the apparent lapse of time to suit the need of the given moment, and thus creates a double scale of time. Early in the play we are told that the bond is for three months and that period is infixed in our minds. Moreover Bassanio speaks of having his servants' liveries "put to making," which seems to imply a leisurely preparation. On the other hand, his ducats once "pursed," from other indications Bassanio is all impatience and hurry. Supper must be ready at latest at five, letters are to be delivered, purchases made and stowed aboard, servants are sent to and fro and bidden "hie thee, away," and, cutting short the mask, at nine o'clock he will instantly aboard. This lover's impatience of Bassanio has beguiled one commentator into supposing that but ten hours elapse between the opening of the action and Bassanio's setting forth to Belmont: a notion obviously false. It will be better for us to note Shakespeare's art in effecting the illusion of a lapse or a hurry of time than to seek for that mathematical accuracy which has its place, though not in a work of the imagination.

ACT II. SCENE VII

In this scene the Prince of Morocco proceeds to his choice of the caskets and is discomforted.

4. *who* is occasionally used referring to an inanimate object as its antecedent, as here. Compare *Pericles*, i. 1. 45: "A mirror *Who* tells us life's but breath."

40. *mortal-breathing*, endowed with human life. Compare *mortal-living* in *Richard III*, iv. 4. 26.

41. *Hyrcanian deserts.* Hyrcania was a desert region lying south of the Caspian sea.

43. *come* [to] *view.* A common idiom. See *Hamlet*, ii. 1. 101: "I will go seek the king."

50. *it were too gross, etc.* It would be too gross a thing to wrap the burial cloths of such a saint in an obscure grave, *i.e.* in a casket made of so common a substance as lead.

53. *undervalued*, inferior in value to. Compare above, i. 1. 165. At the date of this play the proportionate value of gold to silver was as about ten to one.

56. *an angel*, was a gold coin worth at most ten shillings; it was so called from the figure of St. Michael slaying the dragon, on one side.

57. *insculp'd upon*, engraven on the outside of the coin. Here, on the contrary, an angel [the picture of Portia] lies all within the golden bed, [its casket].

59, 60. *key . . . may*, a rhyme in Shakespeare's day.

63. *A carrion Death*, a skull or death's head from which the flesh had rotted away.

73. *your suit is cold.* A proverbial expression. Compare *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, iv. 4. 186: "I hope my master's suit will be but cold."

ACT II. SCENE VIII

Notice that in this scene the passionate outburst of Shylock on learning of Jessica's unfilial conduct is reported by the unsympathetic gallants, Salarino and Salanio, and not represented directly. Are we to believe Salanio's intimation that Shylock was more grieved at the loss of his ducats than that his daughter should have married a hated Christian? And would a direct representation of Shylock in his despair have drawn too deep a draft on our sympathies for the Jew? The gallants also mention the rumours that Antonio's ventures may have miscarried, and apprise us of his loving, hearty leave-taking of Bassanio, now well on his happy way to Belmont.

12. *passion*, commotion, passionate outcry. Compare *Troilus and Cressida*, v. 2. 181: "Your passion draws ears hither."

25. *keep his day*, be punctual to his day of payment. Note how the unfilial conduct of Jessica, with the loss of his money, is mentioned here as hardening the Jew's heart against Antonio. Notice also the rumour of misfortune to Antonio's ships in the next speech.

27. *reason'd*, conversed with. See above, i. 2. 23.

33. *You were best to tell.* No uncommon idiom for *You had better* or *best tell.* Compare *1 Henry VI.* v. 3. 82: "I were best to leave him." This line is readily scanned by regarding *You were best* as the first foot, either contracted to *You're best;* or, better, speedily uttered as in ordinary speech:

You were best to tell Antonio what you hear.

42. *mind of love*, your loving mind; also explained, "Let me entreat you, of love [*i.e.* by our mutual love], that you take not the least thought of it."

48. *affection wondrous sensible*, emotion wonderfully sensitive.

52. *embracèd heaviness*, the sadness which has taken hold of him.

ACT II. SCENE IX

This scene represents the discomfiture of another suitor of Portia, the solemn and deliberate Prince of Arragon; and concludes with the heralded arrival of Bassanio.

18. *to* [the] *hazard.* Compare *Henry V.* iii. 7. 93.

19. *Fortune now*, etc., may good fortune now attend the hope of my heart.

25. *that 'many' may be meant By, etc.* *By* was used commonly after the verb *to mean*, where we should use *for*.

51. *I will assume, etc.* This line is an Alexandrine, as frequently where the sense is broken. Arragon pauses after *desert;* and turning to Portia says, "Give me the key for this [the silver casket]."

53. *Portia* (*Aside*). This reading, which is approved by Dr. Furness, seems necessary to the preservation of Portia's kindliness

and courtesy of spirit. The lips that uttered the beautiful words on "the quality of mercy" could never have taunted a losing but honest lover to his face in the moment of his defeat. The *asides* were by no means always marked in the old editions of plays.

61. *distinct*, accented on the first syllable.

69. *Silver'd o'er*. The idiot's picture was *silver'd o'er*, being contained in a silver box.

70–71. Marry whom you will, you will always have me, a fool, for your head.

74. *By the time*, in proportion to the time.

79. *singed the moth*, evidently rhyming with Arragon's preceding couplet and in mockery of it.

85. *my lord*, a sportive rejoinder to the servant's deep bow and tone of pompous respect in addressing Portia as "my lady." It is by the mockery of Portia's rhyme to the couplet of Arragon, and by this merry answer to her servant that the author makes clear to us how delighted Portia is to have escaped another suitor.

89. *sensible regreets*, evident salutations. The strange word *regreet* is used elsewhere. Compare *King John*, iii. 1. 241: "Unyoke this seizure and this kind *regreet*." It is not unlikely that the fine language of the servant is the cause of Portia's mockery.

91. *Yet I have not*, I have never yet.

98. *high-day wit*, holiday terms. Compare *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, iii. 2. 69: "He writes verses, he speaks holiday."

ACT III. SCENE I

The rumours of Antonio's losses grow more frequent and circumstantial. Shylock is torn apart with rage at Jessica's reported extravagance with his long-hoarded wealth, and with malignant joy as he hears of Antonio's misfortunes and impatiently awaits the forfeit of his bond.

2. *it lives there unchecked*, the rumour is current there uncontradicted.

4. *the narrow seas* [or sea], a usual term for the English Channel. *The Goodwins, I think they call the place.* Goodwin Sands, off the coast of Kent. Notice how Salarino's doubt as to the precise name of the place in which Antonio's ships have come to grief upholds the illusion that we are in Venice, a place remote from England.

30. *the wings she flew withal*, the boy's clothing in which she eloped with Lorenzo.

57. *hindered me* [from gaining] *half a million* [of ducats].

62. *affections*, emotions caused by external objects, as contrasted with *passions*, feelings due to emotions within.

63. [Is he not] *fed with, etc.* Observe how the pathos of the Jew's despised life strengthens Shylock's hold on our sympathies at the very moment when the sense of Antonio's disaster is growing upon us.

83. *what news from Genoa?* This question suggests the lapse of some time since the elopement of Jessica, precisely as the vehemence of Shylock's words to Salanio and Salarino at the beginning of the scene produces the opposite effect of an apparently brief period since that event.

89. *Frankfort* on the Main, famous throughout the Middle Ages for its commercial fairs.

105. *from Tripolis.* This argosy is mentioned above, i. 3. 18.

112. *here? in Genoa? i.e.* known here [in Italy]? in Genoa? The emendation *where* for *here* seems unnecessary.

126. *my turquoise.* The turquoise was often given as a pledge of love, because it was supposed to maintain or change its brilliancy of colour in accordance with the faithfulness or infidelity of the wearer, besides possessing other miraculous qualities. This touch of human affection in Shylock at the moment when he is raving over the extravagance and ingratitude of Jessica can never be overpraised.

131. *fee me an officer*, engage an officer for me [to arrest Antonio the moment his bond is forfeited].

135. "Shakespeare," says one critic, "probably intended to add another shade of darkness to the character of Shylock, by making him still formally devout while meditating his horrible vengeance." Another remarks on this passage: "The Jew invokes the Ancient of Days, who spoke unto Moses aforetime: 'If a man cause a blemish in his neighbour; as he hath done, so shall it be done to him; breach for breach, eye for eye, tooth for tooth; as he hath caused a blemish in a man, so shall it be done to him again.' In entering his synagogue Shylock entrusts his hatred to the safeguard of his faith. Henceforward his vengeance assumes a consecrated character." It is one of the marvels of Shakespeare's power of characterization that we differ about the characters of his personages as we differ about the characters of real people whom we personally know.

ACT III. SCENE II.

Much has happened since the departure of Bassanio. At Belmont the stately Prince of Morocco has made his choice and failed, and the solemn Arragon has followed with no better fate. In Venice Shylock, maddened by his double loss, has raged through the streets, a rabble of boys at his heels, and Tubal has had time to search for the runaways as far as Genoa and back. Rumours, too, of Antonio's losses on distant seas are reported at Venice. On the other hand, although Portia's words, — those of a maiden more than half won, — preclude our thinking of Bassanio as exactly "fresh from Venice" on the opening of this scene, such impetuosity as his, for he "lives upon the rack," we feel cannot have permitted a long postponement of his choice, and we are lured away from the thought of Tubal's search and a rumour slowly making its way across the continent of Europe from Goodwin Sands to the contemplation of a lapse of time that could not have exceeded a few days. Compare with this the concluding note on Act II, Scene VI.

In the present scene Portia desires Bassanio to "tarry" for fear

he choose wrong ; but Bassanio is impatient to know his fate, and choosing the leaden casket finds therein "fair Portia's counterfeit." Portia is thus doubly won, by the terms of her father's will and by the promptings of her own heart. Meanwhile Gratiano has gained Nerissa to consent to marry him if Bassanio's choice shall prove fortunate. So that both couples are happy in Bassanio's success. At this moment, the climax of the story of the caskets, Lorenzo and Jessica arrive with a messenger from Venice by whom it appears that all of Antonio's ventures by sea have failed, his bond has been forfeited, and he lies in prison awaiting the supreme exaction of the Jew.

2. *in* [the event of your] *choosing wrong.*

7–10. Portia is anxious that Bassanio may not choose hastily. She is deeply in love with him, but "yet a maiden hath no tongue but thoughts" [*i.e.* it becomes her not to tell him so] ; and she wishes simply to detain him, at first a day or two, which rises in her eagerness to a month or two. But she is equally concerned lest Bassanio mistake her attitude for an unmaidenly declaration of love.

14. *Beshrew*, a very mild imprecation, "Woe to your eyes."

16. Scan, *One half of me is yours, the other half yours*, making the line contain, as frequently, eleven syllables. The scansion which contracts *the other* into *t'other* destroys the emphasis.

20, 21. These lines, which offer an excellent illustration of the extreme pregnancy of Shakespeare's thought, have been explained: "If it prove that I, who am yours by affection, am not yours owing to your unlucky choice of casket, Fortune ought to suffer the penalty, not I; and yet to lose you will be hell for me."

29. *fear* [for] *the enjoying*, doubt if I shall enjoy.

30, 31. *There may . . as* [between] *treason and my love.*

35. '*Confess*' *and* '*love*,' love is the sum total of my confession.

44. *swan-like end*, in allusion to the popular belief that the swan sings before its death. Shakespeare is fond of the allusion; see *Othello*, v. 2. 247; and *King John*, v. 7. 21.

49. The moment of crowning an English sovereign is heralded

by a flourish of trumpets. Some critics have sought to date this play, 1594, because of this, a supposed allusion to the crowning of Henry of Navarre in that year.

52. The bridegroom was thus awakened by the musicians engaged to accompany him to the bride's house.

55. *young Alcides.* Hercules rescued Hesione who, as a *virgin tribute* to appease the wrath of Neptune, had been chained to a rock by her father, Laomedon, to be devoured by a *sea-monster.* But Bassanio approaches his perilous undertaking *with much more love* [line 54], because Hercules was urged to his exploit not for love of the lady, but for the horses which Laomedon had promised him. The whole similitude in which Bassanio is likened to young Alcides, Portia to Hesione, *the virgin tribute*, and Portia's attendants to *the Dardanian wives* [women, the descendants of Dardanus, the ancestor of the Trojans], is full of the spirit of Greek story.

61. *Live thou* [if thou live], *I live.* The subjunctive is not infrequently indicated by placing the verb before its subject. The line is perfectly metrical without doubling the word *much.*

Live thou, I live (-) With much more dismay

63. *fancy* is often synonymous with *love.* See *Much Ado About Nothing*, iii. 2. 31–32. Here, however, *fancy* is affection bred by the sight; and neither the product of the heart nor the head. Did Portia unconsciously break her oath in providing that this song be sung? Or did Nerissa? She had openly praised Bassanio (i. 2. 129–131). The maid in one of Shakespeare's possible sources, *Il Pecarone*, gave the lover a hint.

73. *the outward shows* [of things] *be least* [like the things] *themselves.*

82. *his*, the old neuter of the possessive pronoun *it* or *hit. Its* is found only toward the end of the sixteenth century. *Its* appears in no work of Shakespeare's published in his lifetime, although the form occurs ten times in the folio, usually in the spelling *it's.*

86. *livers white as milk.* Compare *2 Henry IV.* iv. 3. 113: "The liver white and pale, which is the badge of pusillanimity and cowardice."

87. *excrement*, a word often applied to the hair. See *The Winter's Tale*, iv. 4. 733: "Let me pocket up my pedlar's excrement. [*Takes off his false beard.*]"

88. *beauty*, that is, mere beauty. Notice the usual Shakespearian play on the words *weight* and *light*.

92–96. *those crispéd snaky golden locks . . bred . . in the sepulchre.* Shakespeare expresses much the same thought in *Sonnet lxviii.* The fashion among women of wearing wigs had become very common toward the end of Elizabeth's reign.

94. *Upon supposéd fairness*, "on the strength of their fictitious beauty." Compare *3 Henry VI*, iii. 3. 223: "And tell false Edward, thy supposed king."

99. *an Indian beauty*, a woman that an Indian might consider a beauty; as we might say, a Hottentot beauty. If the word *beauty* has been borrowed from the word *beauteous*, just above, as some have supposed, the student must choose for himself which of the twenty or more guesses — among them *idol*, *blackness*, *suttie*, *poisoner*, *bosom*, *gipsy*, *feature*, and *beldame* — he prefers.

102. *Midas*, the foolish Phrygian king, who asked that everything that he touched might be turned to gold; and, his wish granted, nearly perished of hunger.

106. *paleness*, as Bassanio has already called silver *pale*, *plainness* has been suggested as the right reading, thus bringing out a contrast with *eloquence*. As, however, lead is frequently described as *pale*, this reading of all the old editions should be preserved.

109. *As*, such as, as namely.

112. *rain thy joy.* Compare *1 Henry IV*, v. 1. 47: "It rain'd down fortune showering on your head." *Rein* is an inferior reading.

117. *Or whether. Whether* is sometimes used after *or* where we should omit one of the two. Compare *Coriolanus*, i. 3. 69: "Or whether his fall enraged him, or how 'twas."

120. *hairs.* Used in the plural in Shakespeare's day. Compare *King John*, iii. 4. 66: "Bind up your hairs."

124. *having made one.* We expect a verb agreeing with this clause to follow; but in the hurry of Bassanio's rapturous speech the construction is not carried out. Such examples of colloquial phraseology in Shakespeare, far from being blemishes, add greatly to the dramatic quality of his dialogue.

126. *unfurnish'd*, unmatched with its fellow eye.

126, 128. *how far . . . so far*, in modern English *as . . . so.*

140. Notice how Bassanio's delight and exaltation of spirit at his success is expressed in the continuance after the "scroll" of rhyming lines; and how Portia's succeeding lines, in their deep seriousness, drop back into blank verse.

141. *I come by note* [in accordance with the scroll or warrant just read] *to give* [a kiss] *and to receive* [you, the lady].

145. *Giddy in spirit, still gazing in a doubt.* Broken as this line is, it is not unmetrical; *spirit* may have been pronounced as one syllable.

160. *sum of — nothing.* Preferable to the reading *something*, of equally good authority, because it conforms more with the negations (*unlesson'd, unschool'd, unpractised*) that follow, and is more in accord with the careless, happy depreciation of herself which characterizes Portia's whole speech.

162. *Happy in this.* The old editions all read "Happiest is this," explained by regarding *Happiest* as neuter, the happiest of all is (*it* or *this*), etc. The emendation *in* preserves the construction; *happy in this . . . happier than this . . . happiest of all in, etc.*

173. *this ring.* The giving of a ring as a token of fidelity is of frequent occurrence in the old drama. See *Romeo and Juliet*, iii. 2. 142. The employment of the device of the episode of Portia's ring to lighten the gravity of the ending of this comedy is one of the happiest examples of Shakespeare's consummate dramatic skill.

176. *vantage*, the position of one who is master of the situation. To *exclaim on* one is to complain of one's conduct. For *vantage*, see *Hamlet*, v. 2. 401; for *exclaim on*, see *1 Henry VI*, v. 3. 134.

185. *Express'd and not express'd*, expressed in inarticulate sounds.

193. *none from me*, none different from me, none which I do not wish you.

200. *the maid*. Nerissa was in no respect a servant. She was doubtless as well born, though not as rich, as Portia herself; and bore the same relation of friendship and companionship to Portia that Gratiano, a gentleman by birth, bore to his friend Bassanio.

214. *shall be*, in modern English *will be*.

223. A question has been raised as to why Jessica receives no welcome from Portia. This is only apparent. General salutations between the two parties take place while Bassanio is speaking; but the importance of Lorenzo's message to Bassanio usurps the place which mere courtesies might otherwise occupy. Portia being engaged in the interest which Antonio's letter excites, Gratiano (in line 240) calls Nerissa to the charge of Jessica.

232. *past all saying nay*, beyond the possibility of refusal.

240–253. The dialogue of these lines is carried on while Bassanio is reading Antonio's letter.

242. *royal*, a term applied to the wealthy and powerful Italian merchants who aided kingdoms with their funds, and often held mortgages on them. The Medici and the Pozzi in Italy, the Fuggers in Germany, and Sir Thomas Gresham in England were merchants of this type. The term here conveys no more than a complimentary allusion to Antonio's wealth.

252. *And I must freely have the half of anything*, an Alexandrine line, scan it how we will. There is no reason why we should not acknowledge frankly that, intentionally or inadvertently, Shakespeare frequently uses the Alexandrine in single lines in his dramatic verse.

275. *it should appear*. This use of shall is much like the German *sollen*, which means *is to* and not quite *ought*.

280. *And doth impeach the freedom of the state*, denies that those, like himself not natives of Venice, have equal rights there if, etc. See below, iv. 1. 38: "If you deny it, let the danger light Upon your charter and your city's freedom."

282. *magnificoes*, the chief men of Venice were so called.

295. *unwearied*, that is *most unwearied*, the superlative is communicated from the words *kindest* and *best-condition'd*. Compare above, ii. 1. 46: "To make me blest or cursed'st among men."

304. *thorough*, through, as often spelled.

315. *Since you are dear bought* [with all the anxiety that I have suffered while your fate as a suitor hung in the balance].

321. *between you and I*. This is so common as to amount to an Elizabethan idiom. Compare above, ii. 6. 30. None of the old copies indicate that Bassanio reads this letter, and yet, as Portia asks to "hear the letter of your friend," the assignment of the reading to Bassanio seems proper. Dr. Furness finely suggests that Bassanio read until the words, "If I might see you at my death," and his voice failing him from emotion, that Portia finish the reading, and passionately add without pause: "O love, dispatch all business and be gone!"

ACT III. SCENE III

14. *dull-eyed*, wanting in perception.

25. *grant this forfeiture to hold*, allow it to hold good.

26. *deny the course of law*, refuse to let the law take its course.

27, 28. *For the commodity that strangers have* [that is the right to trade and the assurance of legal protection in their bargains] . . . *if it* [this right] *be denied, it* [this denial] *will*, etc. By others the word *it* is made to refer to the course of law, and a comma is placed after *law*, in line 26.

ACT III. SCENE IV

Portia entrusts her house to the keeping of Lorenzo and Jessica, and, giving it out that she intends to retire with Nerissa to a neighbour

ing monastery until their plighted lords' return, sends a messenger to her cousin Bellario, and tells Nerissa of her plan to visit Venice in disguise.

6. [To] *How true a gentleman*, the dative case. In modern English we use the dative only when it comes between the verb and its object: "You send your friend money."

7. *lover*. This word was commonly used of friendship between men. See *Coriolanus*, v. 2. 14: "Thy general is my lover."

9. *customary bounty* [your ordinary benevolence] *can enforce you* [to be].

11. *Nor shall not*. The double negative as above, i. 2. 28.

22. *the praising of myself*. "*The* frequently precedes a verbal that is followed by an object" (Abbott).

34. *The which*. See above, i. 3. 4, and note thereon.

34. *my love and some necessity Now lays*. Note the singular verb with two subjects.

49. *Padua*, famous for the learned jurists of its university.

52. *with imagined speed*, such as can only be thought. Compare *Henry V*, iii. prologue: "Thus with imagined wing our swift scene flies."

53. *tranect*, perhaps better *traject* from the Italian *traghetto*, a ferry.

59. *Before they think of us* [of our seeing them].

66. *And speak between*, etc. And speak with high, shrill voice such as boys have when they are changing from childhood to manhood.

72. *I could not do withal*, I could not help it. A very common phrase and capable of no other interpretation. Cf. below, iv. 1. 412, and the note thereon.

77. *Jacks*, a term of contempt. See *Much Ado About Nothing*, i. 1. 185: "Do you play the flaunting Jack?"

81. *all my whole device*. Compare *1 Henry VI*, i. 1. 126: "All the whole army."

82. *my coach*. Towards the close of Elizabeth's reign coaches

had become very common in England, although the queen had ridden to her coronation on horseback.

ACT III. SCENE V

This brief scene, which shows us Lorenzo and Jessica in charge of Belmont in the absence of Portia, produces the necessary effect of a lapse of time between Portia's departure and the day of trial.

3. *I fear you*, I fear for you.

19. A line from the *Alexandreis* of Philip Qualtier written in the thirteenth century which became proverbial: *Incidis in Scyllam cupiens vitare Charibdim.*

21. *I shall be saved by my husband.* Perhaps an allusion to *1 Corinthians*, vii. 14: "The unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband."

28. *a rasher on the coals*, a favourite dish of the time.

34. *are out*, have fallen out.

57. '*cover.*' Launcelot plays on the word which means to lay covers on the table, that is set the table, and also to put the hat on the head. I know my duty, and do not wear my hat in the presence of my superiors.

60. *quarrelling with occasion*, quibbling with words at every opportunity.

70. *O dear discretion* [sober sense and fair meaning], *how* [absurdly] *his words are suited* [matched to the thought].

73. *A many fools.* The *a* thus inserted before a numeral indicates that the objects enumerated are regarded collectively as one. Compare the expressions: "This nineteen years," "This many years"; and Tennyson in *The Miller's Daughter*: "They have not shed a many tear."

74, 75. *for a tricksy word Defy the matter*, for the sake of playing on the word set the meaning at defiance.

82. *And if on earth he do not mean it. Mean* is the reading of

all the old editions, and various emendations, such as *merit it* and *earn it* have been offered. If the reading of the text is to be retained, perhaps the best explanation is that which gives to *mean it* the force of, "to observe the mean, enjoy blessings moderately."

95. *set you forth*, describe you to advantage.

ACT IV. SCENE I

"The trial Scene, with its tugging vicissitudes of passion and its hush of terrible expectation, — now ringing with the Jew's sharp, spiteful snaps of malice, now made musical with Portia's strains of eloquence, now holy with Antonio's tender breathings of friendship, and dashed, from time to time, with Gratiano's fierce jets of wrath and fiercer jets of mirth, — is hardly surpassed in tragic power anywhere; and as it forms the catastrophe proper, so it concentrates the interest of the whole play" (Hudson).

1. *What*, an exclamation of attention. See below, lines 46 and 111 of this scene.

5, 6. *empty From.* Shakespeare also uses the modern *empty of.* We say *free from.*

8. *obdurate*, accent on the second syllable.

9. *And that*, and because.

16. Shylock shows great deference to the Duke, but to no one else except to Portia, disguised as a young lawyer, during that part of her discourse which agrees with his claims.

29. *a royal merchant.* See above, note on iii. 2. 242.

34. *a gentle* [Gentile] *answer.* See above, note on ii. 6. 51.

37. *the due and forfeit*, the forfeiture which is due.

38. *let the danger light, etc.* Such a threat could have had little weight with the Doge of Venice, the charter of which was not revokable as the gift of any prince.

43. *But* [I'll] *say, it is my humour* [my fancy or determination to act thus]. Shylock is not using the word *humour* in the later

restricted sense which Jonson applied to it of a ruling passion or propensity. By some this passage is punctuated: But, say it is my humour, *i.e.* suppose it is my humour.

47. *a gaping pig*, a pig's head served as a dish at table.

50. "*for affection* [either for love or dislike — sympathy or antipathy, — being the] *master of passion, sways it* [passion] *to the mood of what it* [affection] *likes or loathes.*" This, the reading of Knight, has the advantage of changing only one letter of the original and doubtless corrupt text, *master* for *masters*. *Affection*, emotion produced through the senses by external objects, is here as above, iii. 1. 62, distinguished from *passion*, emotion stirred from inward feeling.

56. *woollen bag-pipe*. *Woollen* is the reading of all the old editions and doubtless refers to the material with which the bag containing the reservoir of wind which blows the pipe is covered.

62. *A losing suit*, one in which I lose my money.

68. *Every offence* [resentment for an injury], *is not a hate*. In his reply Shylock takes *offence* to mean affront, insult.

69. *a serpent sting thee twice*. Dr. Furness calls attention to the hiss in these words.

70. *think* [remember], *you question* [are arguing] *with the Jew*, [a man on whose hard, cruel nature you are wasting your words]. Compare *As You Like It*, iii. 4. 38: "I met the Duke yesterday and had much question with him."

76. *and* [command them] *to make no noise*.

82. *with all brief and plain conveniency*, with such directness and brevity as is fitting the case.

92. *slavish parts*. Notice the actor's figure of the world conceived as a play in which the various parts or rôles are distributed. Compare *As You Like It*, ii. 7. 142: "And one man in his time plays many parts."

105. *Bellario, a learned doctor*. The reputation of Bellario, Portia's cousin (see above, iii. 4. 50), must be conceived of as such that (like one Discalzio, a famous jurist contemporary with Shake-

speare and also of Padua), Portia could feel sure that the Doge would consult him in a case of such moment. She was thus able to arrange her plot during the time intervening between Bassanio's departure from Belmont and the day of the trial, and to come into court as young Balthasar accredited as a judge — not as an advocate — by the letter of Bellario.

126. Scan, *Of thy sharp envy. Can no prayers pierce thee?*

129. *And for thy life let justice be accused.* Let justice be impeached that she allows a being so cruel to live.

131. *Pythagoras*, of Samos, who held the doctrine of the transmigration of souls. Compare *Twelfth Night*, iv. 2. 54:

> "*Clown.* What is the opinion of Pythagoras concerning wild-fowl?
> *Malvolio.* That the soul of our grandam might haply inhabit a bird."

134. *a wolf, who hang'd for human slaughter.* A connection has been surmised between Shylock and the Jewish Doctor Lopez, an alleged conspirator against the queen, hanged at Tyburn in the very year of the earliest performance of this play. The affair made a great noise, and the hatred of the people was roused against the Jews, of which there were not a few in England, although their presence was not officially allowed.

134. *who hang'd for human slaughter.* This clause is an absolute one, and not dependent on the rest of the sentence. It is variously called by the grammarians a nominative absolute or by the Latin term *nominativus pendens*, the hanging nominative.

162. *no impediment to let him lack*, no hindrance to his receiving.

165. *whose*, for he. Compare *King Lear*, v. 3. 46:

> "To send the old and miserable king
> To some retention and appointed guard;
> Whose [for his] age has charms in it."

170. *your place*, Portia's place as a judge would be on the dais, or lower platform below the Doge's seat, or possibly beside him.

171. *the difference That holds this present question*, the dispute that is the cause of this discussion.

182. *Then must the Jew be merciful.* Portia means to convey no idea of compulsion in her word *must*, but Shylock misunderstands her.

184. *The quality of mercy.* Notice how naturally this splendid passage rises from the necessities of the dialogue. Compare *Ecclesiasticus*, xxxv. 20: "Mercy is seasonable in the time of affliction as clouds of rain in the time of drought."

204. *if thou follow*, if you insist on your plea in all its strictness.

208. *discharge the money*, *i.e.* the debt.

210. *twice the sum.* See below, line 234, *thrice.* The disparity is trivial.

215. *Wrest once the law, etc.*, for once bend the law to your authority.

217. *curb . . . of his will.* Compare *1 Henry IV*, iii. 1. 171: "And curbs himself even of his natural scope."

223. *A Daniel come to judgement.* Compare *The History of Susanna*, 45: "The Lord raised up the holy spirit of a young child (*youth* in the *Authorized Version*), whose name was Daniel." Daniel also detected the imposture of the priests of Bel in the Apocryphal *History of Bel and the Dragon.*

241. *power*, pronounced as two syllables.

248. *Hath full relation*, is fully applicable. For it is the meaning of the law that the penalty attached to each bond shall be paid as therein provided; and this applies to the present case.

251. *more elder.* Shakespeare frequently employs the double comparative. Compare *The Tempest*, i. 2. 439: "his more braver daughter."

254. '*Nearest his heart.*' When Shylock suggested the forfeit he stipulated for

> "an equal pound
> Of your fair flesh, to be cut off and taken
> In what part of your body pleaseth me."

The specification 'nearest his heart' must be supposed an agreement at the signing of the bond.

255. Scan, *It is so.* *Are there balance here to weigh?*

255. *balance.* This word was used both as a singular and a plural in Shakespeare's time. Confusion as to the number of words ending in a sibilant, *s* or *c*, is very frequent.

275. *speak me fair in death*, speak kindly of me when I am dead. Compare *Henry VIII*, iv. 2. 32: "Yet thus far, Griffith, give me leave to speak him."

277. *love*, lover, true friend.

278. *Repent but you*, only so much as regret that you have lost your friend, and your friend regrets not that he pays your debt.

281. *with all my heart.* A jest such as this heightens the pathos of the situation and is very true to life. Compare John of Gaunt's jest on his name when he is on his death-bed, *Richard II*, ii. 1. 73–83.

283. *Which* for *who* was common, and used at times for emphasis. Compare the Lord's Prayer.

296. *Barrabas*, so spelled and pronounced by Shakespeare and Marlowe. Shylock affects to be shocked at the impiety of these "Christian husbands."

305. *Tarry a little.* Much has been written on the law involved in this famous case. Portia's first plea, that the law allowed the pound of flesh but no drop of blood, is a pure quibble, and would have been accepted in no court of Europe. Her second plea, that the portion cut must be precisely a pound, and neither more or less, is no better, as the law cannot demand, in the performance of a contract, an utter impossibility. The third plea of Portia, that in which she invokes the law of Venice against any alien who plots against the life of a citizen, is sound and sufficient; and on this the case is properly decided. It has been surmised that this last plea is the defence of Bellario, the learned Doctor of Padua; and that the more brilliant and specious, if legally unsound, pleas are the product of Portia's woman's wit. It is more likely that we have in

the whole story of the bond what has always been the current popular conception of law — that it deals with the letter of men's agreements and is little tempered by the spirit of equity. This notion was almost as false in the time of Shakespeare as to-day.

327. *a just pound*, an exact pound. Compare *an equal pound*, above, i. 3. 150.

328. *in the substance*, in the weight.

334. Compare i. 3. 47.

335. *pause.* At this point the play hangs between tragedy and comedy. Shylock had sworn to have his bond. Might he not have kept his oath and, taking his bloody forfeit, have pulled down Antonio and himself in one common ruin? Such sympathy as we feel for Shylock is, to a large degree, the result of the more tolerant spirit of modern time. With his choice here made, — and that choice involves an abject confession that "sufferance is the badge of all our tribe," — even our respect vanishes, and we see in Shylock nothing but the malevolent and remorseless usurer, cowed in the moment of his long-sought revenge and slinking away foiled and baffled. It is plain that *The Merchant of Venice* could not have contained the happy story of Portia and the caskets and at the same time have ended as a tragedy.

352. *party*, here used in its legal sense, a party to a suit.

357. *predicament.* This word was originally a term in logic, meaning much the same as category. It had already reached its popular acceptance in Shakespeare's time.

362. *formerly*, a legal term, equivalent to the more modern *aforesaid.*

363. *Down* [on your knees], *therefore.*

372. *Which humbleness* [submission] *may drive* [commute] *unto a fine.*

373. *Ay, for the state, not for Antonio.* The half which comes to the state may be commuted to a fine, but not the half which comes to Antonio.

380–385. *So* [If it] *please my lord. . . . To quit* [release] *the*

fine for one half of his goods [the half which the state was to have received], *I am content; so* [provided that] *he* [Shylock] *will let me have The other half* [which was awarded to me] *in use* [in trust for the benefit of Jessica], *to render* [return] *it, Upon his* [Shylock's] *death, unto the gentleman That lately stole his daughter.*

399. *ten more* [godfathers] to make up twelve, the number of a jury.

402. *desire your grace of pardon.* Compare *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, iii. 1. 185: "I shall desire you of more acquaintance."

405. *serves you not*, is not at your command.

412. *withal* is here a preposition governing *ducats* and equivalent to *with*. This preposition always follows its object. Compare *Measure for Measure*, iv. 3. 145: "Her cause and yours I'll perfect him withal." Elsewhere the word performs more the function of an adverb. See above, iii. 4. 72: "I could not do withal;" and below, iv. 1. 450.

418. *more mercenary*, mercenary beyond a desire for the gratification that comes from the doing of a good deed.

447. *hold out enemy.* Compare *Much Ado About Nothing*, i. 1. 91: "I will hold friends with you."

451. *commandement.* Here the old spelling, which is preserved in the text, conveys the old pronunciation in four syllables and saves the metre. Compare *1 Henry VI*, i. 3. 20: "From him I have express commandement." Elsewhere in Shakespeare this word is pronounced as now. See *The Winter's Tale*, ii. 2. 8.

ACT IV. SCENE II

Notice the care with which Portia, as Balthasar, carries out her professional duty in sending the deed to Shylock for his signature; and how her request that Gratiano show the way to the Jew's house affords to Nerissa an opportunity to get back her ring from her husband also.

15. *old swearing*, great, plenty of swearing.

ACT V. SCENE I

In this, the single scene of the last act, we have the happy conclusion of the story of the caskets fretted and prolonged by the charming episode of the rings. Notice how, after the contending passions of the trial scene, the peace and beauty of Belmont is heightened by the lovers' talk of Lorenzo and Jessica; how happily Portia's mischievous raillery of Bassanio for parting with her ring stops short of excess; and how the gentleman and the soldier are disclosed in Bassanio who, in his sore trouble, does not breathe in excuse that it was Antonio that did "enforce" him to send the ring after Balthasar. (See above, iv. 1. 449.)

4. *Troilus*, son of Priam. The story of Troilus and Cressida was well known to the contemporaries of Shakespeare not only from Chaucer's treatment of it but from a play on the subject staged before Shakespeare's drama of that title.

7. *Thisbe*. The story of the unfortunate lovers, Pyramus and Thisbe, told by Ovid in his *Metamorphoses*, iv. 55–166, was translated by Golding in 1564. Shakespeare employs it in burlesque in the last act of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. In editions of Chaucer's works *Troylus and Cryseyde* immediately precedes *The Legende of Goode Women* in which Thisbe, Dido, and Medea are mentioned in the order preserved by Shakespeare in this passage.

10. The *willow* is an English, not a classical, emblem of forsaken love. Compare *3 Henry VI*, iii. 3. 228: "I'll wear the willow garland for his sake."

11. *waft*, for *waft'd*, from *wafted*. This contraction is not unusual. Compare *King John*, ii. 1. 72: "A braver choice of dauntless spirits Than now the English bottoms have waft o'er."

13. *Medea*, the enchantress of Colchos. An allusion in harmony with the weird mysteriousness of night, as well as with Jessica's story, who, like Medea, "carried off her father's treasure and ran away with her lover."

14. *That did renew old Æson.* According to Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, vii. 162, Æson was restored to youth by his daughter, Medea.

15. *steal*, a teasing word of the lover, deliberately turned aside by Jessica in her reply, *stealing her soul, etc.*

25. *in* [the] *silence.* Compare for this omission of the article, *Othello*, ii. 1. 24: "On [the] most part of their fleet."

28. *Stephano*, pronounced here and below, line 51, Stephán̆o.

31. *By holy crosses*, in allusion to the many wayside shrines of Roman Catholic countries at which the devout are accustomed to kneel in prayer.

35. *nor we have not.* Note the double negative and compare iii. 4. 11.

37. *ceremoniously let us prepare Some welcome*, let us prepare some ceremonious welcome.

39. *Sola, sola.* Launcelot is imitating the horn of a post or courier. He comes in, circles about Lorenzo and Jessica without once looking at them, delivers his message, and is off.

57. *touches*, the act of the hand of the musician on the strings.

59. *patines of bright gold.* The patine is a plate used in the Eucharist and has been variously interpreted here to signify the stars themselves, or better, considering that the stars shine faintly on a moonlit night, "the broken clouds, like flaky disks of curdled gold, which slowly drift across the heavens and veil at times the brightness of the moon" (Furness).

61. *like an angel sings.* Shakespeare elsewhere refers to the Platonic idea that the eight spheres revolve, guided each by its siren (or angel), who sings in the tone of her own sphere, producing harmony in the united tones. (*De Republica*, X.) See *Antony and Cleopatra*, v. 2. 83: "His voice was propertied As all the tuned spheres;" and *Pericles*, v. 1. 231. See also *Job*, xxxviii. 7: "The morning stars sang together."

62. *cherubins.* Cherubin was often conceived of as a singular, hence the double plural here.

65. *Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it. Close . . . in* is a compound verb, *enclose;* it refers to *soul*, not to *harmony*. The reading *it in* for *in it* is defensible on the score of euphony, if for no better reason.

66. *Diana*, the goddess of the moon.

72. *unhandled colts*. Compare *The Tempest*, iv. 1. 175:

> "Then I beat my tabor,
> At which, like unback'd colts, they prick'd their ears,
> Advanced their eyelids, lifted up their noses,
> As they smelt music."

77. *perceive them* [to] *make, etc.*

79. *the poet*, Ovid.

80. *Orpheus*. See *Metamorphoses*, x and xi; and compare the song, *Henry VIII*, iii. 1. 3:

> "Orpheus with his lute made trees,
> And the mountain tops that freeze,
> Bow themselves when he did sing."

84. *Nor is not*. Compare above, iii. 4. 11.

86. *spirit*, one syllable, *sprite*, as frequently elsewhere. Compare ii. 2. 196.

87. *Erebus*, the gloomy space under the earth through which the shades pass on their way to Hades.

89. The talk of Lorenzo and Jessica, the music playing all the while, prevents them from hearing the approach of Portia and Nerissa, who enter on the other side opposite to the garden-seat on which the lovers are seated.

108. *To their right praise*, so that they obtain the honour which they deserve.

109. *Endymion*, the shepherd, sleeping on Mount Latmos, was seen and beloved by Selene or Diana, the moon, who came down to kiss him and rest at his side.

112. *as the blind man, etc.*, referring to a case in which a blind man is at no advantage over his neighbours possessed of sight.

115. *Which*, who [*i.e.* our husbands] *speed, we hope, etc.*

121. *tucket*, from the Italian *toccata*, a peculiar set of notes played on the trumpet to denote the arrival of a given person. Lorenzo recognizes the notes as indicating the approach of Bassanio.

127. *hold day*. We should have daylight when those who dwell on the opposite side of the globe (the Antipodes) have it, if Portia, our sun, were to walk by night.

129. For similar plays on the word *light*, see above, ii. 6. 42, and iii. 2. 91.

132. *God sort all*, God dispose all. Compare *Richard III*, ii. 3. 36: "If God sort it so."

136. *in all sense*, in all reason.

141. *this breathing courtesy*, one consisting merely in breath, that is, words.

142. Gratiano and Nerissa have been conversing apart in dumb show.

148. Scan, *Thăt shé did gíve mé, (´) whóse pósy wás.*

148. *posy*, a motto inscribed on a ring, a knife, or other article.

150. *leave me not*, do not part with me.

151. *What talk you, etc.* Compare *Coriolanus*, iii. 3. 83: "What do you prate of service?" where similar impatience is denoted. And see above, ii. 5, 3: "What, Jessica!"

177. *I were best to*, I had better. Compare note on ii. 8. 33, above.

193. *If you did know, etc.* Verses such as these, in which the same word or phrase is repeated again and again, were very common in the older drama and were used as serious ornaments of style, and not, as here so much more fitly, to mark the amusing discomfiture of Bassanio and Portia's mocking retort.

199. *virtue*, power, for the possessor was master of Portia and all that was hers. See above, iii. 2. 171.

204. *had pleased to have defended*, for had pleased to defend The double perfect was not uncommon.

205. *wanted*, as to have wanted.

206. *ceremony*, a thing or observance held sacred.

214. *Even he*, referring back to *a civil doctor Which did refuse*, and regarding the intervening clauses as parenthetical.

217. *shame* [at being thought ungrateful] *and* [a sense of what] *courtesy* [demanded of me].

220. *candles of the night.* Compare *Romeo and Juliet*, iii. 5. 9: "Night's candles are burnt out."

250, 251. *Which . . . had quite miscarried. Which* refers to Antonio's loan of his body for the wealth, *i.e.* prosperity, of Bassanio. *Miscarried* is metaphorical as applying to the loan as a venture.

296. *not satisfied.* You have not yet heard all the details of these events.

298. *charge us there upon inter'gatories.* According to Lord Campbell, *Shakespeare's Legal Acquirements*, p. 62: "In the Court of Queen's Bench, when a complaint is made against a person for a 'contempt,' the practice is that before sentence is finally pronounced he is sent into the Crown Office, and being there 'charged upon interrogatories,' he is made to swear that he 'will answer all things faithfully.'"

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